

Dying for the Faith, Killing for the Faith

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Dying for the Faith, Killing for the Faith

Old-Testament Faith-Warriors (1 and 2 Maccabees)
in Historical Perspective

Edited by
Gabriela Signori



BRILL

LEIDEN • BOSTON
2012

This book was supported by funds made available by the “Cultural Foundation of Integration” Center of Excellence at the University of Konstanz, established in the framework of the German Federal and State Initiative for Excellence.

Cover illustration: “Machabei”. Hartmann Schedel, *Weltchronik. Kolorierte Gesamtausgabe von 1493*. Einleitung und Kommentar von Stephan Füssel, Wetbildverlag, Augsburg 2005, Blatt LXXIXv nach der Ausgabe der Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek in Weimar, Sign. Inc. 119) – (Blatt CXIXv Die sieben schlaffer).

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Dying for the faith, killing for the faith : Old-Testament faith-warriors (1 and 2 Maccabees) in historical perspective / edited by Gabriela Signori.

p. cm. — (Brill's studies in intellectual history, ISSN 0920-8607 ; v. 206)

Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.

ISBN 978-90-04-21105-6 (hardback : alk. paper) 1. Bible. O.T. Apocrypha. Maccabees—Criticism, interpretation, etc.—History. I. Signori, Gabriela, 1960–

BS1825.52.D95 2011

229'.708303609—dc23

2011034516

ISSN 0920-8607

ISBN 978 90 04 21105 6 (hardback)

ISBN 978 90 04 21104 9 (e-book)

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

JAN ASSMANN, Dr. Phil. (1965), retired from the Chair of Egyptology at Heidelberg University and is since 2005 Honorary Professor of Cultural and Religious Studies at Constance. He has published on ancient Egyptian religion, literature and history, on cultural theory ("cultural memory"), history of religion ("monotheism and cosmotheism"), the reception of Egypt in European tradition, literary theory and historical anthropology.

ALBRECHT BERGER, Dr. Phil. (1988), has been professor of Byzantine Studies at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität of Munich since 2003. He has published extensively on the urban topography of Byzantine Constantinople and also edited various hagiographical texts, such as the *Lives of Gregorios of Agrigentum* (1995), *Mamas of Kaisareia* (2002), and *Gregentios of Taphar* (2006). He currently works, as the member of a research group, on the new edition of the 14th-century Church History of Nikephoros Kallistou Xanthopoulos.

DAVID J. COLLINS, S.J., Ph.D. (2004), Northwestern University (Evanston, Illinois), is an Associate Professor of medieval history at Georgetown University. He has published extensively on the cult of the saints and Renaissance humanism in Germany, including the book *Reforming Saints: Saints' Lives and Their Authors in Germany, 1470–1530* (Oxford 2008). His current research evaluates notions of Europe's disenchantment through investigations of late medieval and early modern debates over learned magic in academic, ecclesiastical, and courtly milieus.

JOHANNES HAHN, Dr. Phil. (1986) and Habilitation (1993), University of Heidelberg, holds the Chair in Ancient History with main focus on Roman History at the University of Münster. His research interests mainly comprise the Roman Empire and Late Antiquity. Recently, he has written extensively on the relationship of society and religion (in particular Judaism and Christianity) in the Roman Empire, especially on religious conflict and religious violence, and has published, besides a book on Alexander in India, studies on Greek philosophy and medicine in Rome.

DANIEL JOSLYN-SIEMIATKOSKI, Ph.D. (2005), Boston College is Associate Professor of Church History at Church Divinity School of the Pacific (Episcopal Church) and a member of the Core Doctoral Faculty at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA. His primary areas of research are the cult of the saints, the history of Jewish-Christian relations from the fourth to twelfth centuries, and the encounter of Anglicanism with other religions. He is the author of *Christian Memories of the Maccabean Martyrs* (Palgrave Macmillan 2009) and he is currently working on a Christian commentary on the rabbinic text Mishnah Avot for the series Christian Commentaries on Non-Christian Sacred Texts.

HENRIKE LÄHNEMANN holds the Chair of German Studies at Newcastle University. She has worked on the transmission of the Book of Judith (*Hystoria Judith* 2006, *The Sword of Judith* 2010). Her current research projects are the reconstruction of the manuscript production of Medingen convent (<http://research.ncl.ac.uk/medingen>) and editing a companion on Northern German Mysticism together with Elizabeth Andersen, Newcastle University.

ELIZABETH LAPINA, Ph.D. (2007), The Johns Hopkins University, is a Lecturer at Durham University. She is studying the history of the crusades and is particularly interested in their understanding and representations in the Middle Ages. More specifically, her research deals with the chronicles and iconography of the crusades in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. She is currently preparing a book, in which she examines several chronicles of the First Crusade and argues that they were more sophisticated than it is usually believed, revealing the existence of a number of competing visions on various aspects of the crusading.

OLIVER MÜNSCH, Ph.D. (2000), University of Freiburg, participated in a research project on Carolingian laws, from which his doctoral thesis about the *Liber legum* of Lupus of Ferrières emerged. His postdoctoral work deals with the propaganda of the polemical literature written during the controversy between ecclesiastical and secular power in the late eleventh century. While teaching for a decade at the University of Freiburg, he has also published on history of canon law and medieval number symbolism.

ANDREAS PEČAR is Professor of Early-Modern History at the Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg. In 2005/06 he was Feodor Lynen Fellow of the Humboldt Foundation at the Queen Mary University of London, in 2007/08 he was Fellow at the Kulturwissenschaftliches Kolleg at the Center of Excellence of the University of Konstanz. Recently he has published about political biblicism in England and Scotland (*Macht der Schrift. Politischer Biblizismus in Schottland und England zwischen Reformation und Bürgerkrieg 1534–1642* [München 2011]).

PAVLINA RYCHTEROVA is Lecturer at the University of Vienna and Research Fellow at the Institute for Medieval Research of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna. She has published a monograph on the Central European reception of the writings of Bridget of Sweden, a critical edition of the medieval Czech translation of Bridget's 'revelationes' and articles on various aspects of religiosity in the late medieval Central Europe. In 2010 she was awarded the ERC Starting Grant for her project concerning the vernacular religious identities in Central Europe.

GABRIELA SIGNORI, Ph.D. (1991), Habilitation (1999), has been Professor of Medieval History in the Department of History and Sociology at the University of Konstanz, Germany, since 2006. From 2001–2006 she was Professor at the Westfaelische Wilhelms University of Muenster. Her main area of research is social history of late medieval towns: law, gender, culture and religion. Here she continuously publishes several monographs, volumes and papers, among are *Konkurrierende Zugehörigkeiten. Praktiken der Namengebung im europäischen Vergleich* (Konstanz 2010), *Häuser, Namen, Identitäten. Beiträge zur spätmittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Stadtgeschichte* (Konstanz 2009), *Das 13. Jahrhundert. Eine Einführung in die Geschichte des spätmittelalterlichen Europas* (Stuttgart/Berlin/Köln 2007), *Von der Paradiesehe zur Gütergemeinschaft. Die Ehe in der mittelalterlichen Lebens- und Vorstellungswelt* (Frankfurt 2011).

PAVEL SOUKUP, Ph.D. (2007), Charles University in Prague, is a researcher at the Centre for Medieval Studies in Prague. His research interests include Holy War in the Middle Ages and medieval religious literature. He has been involved in research projects on later crusades and on fifteenth-century polemics against Hussite heresy. He has published on Hussite history, more specifically on reform preaching and

concepts of religious violence. His dissertation on early sermons of Jakoubek of Stříbro is forthcoming (*Reformní kazatelství a Jakoubek ze Stříbra*, Praha 2011).

GABRIEL STOUKALOV-POGODIN completed a MA in History at the University of Constance with a thesis on the medieval artistic tradition of Ile-Ife, Nigeria in 2009. He is currently working as a journalist in Cologne.

KAI TRAMPEDACH, Dr. Phil. (1993), is Professor for Ancient History at the Ruprecht-Karls-University Heidelberg. His main research topics are: The relationship of philosophy or religion/theology and politics; political anthropology in the Ancient World; Hellenistic and Roman Judaism; and political rituals and hagiography in Late Antiquity. Recently, he edited (and contributed to) *Die Bibel als politisches Argument. Voraussetzungen und Folgen biblizistischer Herrschaftslegitimation in der Vormoderne* (Oldenbourg 2007) and *Practitioners of the Divine. Greek Priests and Religious Officials from Homer to Heliodorus* (Harvard University Press 2008). He currently prepares for publication a book on The Politics of Divination in Ancient Greece.

DANIEL WEIDNER, Ph.D. (2000), is Associate Director of the Zentrum for Literatur- und Kulturforschung, Berlin. His main areas of research are the interrelation of religion and literature, theories of secularization, the history of philology and literary theory, and German-Jewish Literature. Among his Publications are *Gershom Scholem: Politisches, esoterisches und historiographisches Schreiben* (Fink 2003), *Nachleben der Religionen. Kulturwissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zur Dialektik der Säkularisierung* (co-editor, Fink 2007), *Bibel als Literatur. Eine Anthologie* (co-editor, Fink 2008), *Benjamin-Studien* (co-editor, Fink 2008, 2011), *Profanes Leben. Walter Benjamins Dialektik der Säkularisierung* (editor, Suhrkamp 2010), *Bibel und Literatur um 1800* (Fink 2011).

INTRODUCTION

Gabriela Signori

The idea of defending faith through violence gradually took shape following the decision by Antiochus Epiphanes (175–164 B.C.E.) to prohibit the Jews from living according to their law, his desecration of their Temple, and his order to have all those killed who resisted his instructions (1 Macc 1:17–29). In Modiin, a village northwest of Jerusalem, armed resistance formed under the priest Mattathias and his five sons, John, Simon, Judas, Eleazar, and Jonathan (1 Macc 2:2–5). Each son's first name had its own descriptive surname; that of Judas, "Maccabeus," "the hammerer," would give the four books treating the Jewish revolt against Seleucid rule their name. All four would be included in the Septuagint.¹ Later, St. Jerome (d. 419/420) would remove books three and four from the Christian canon of Holy Scripture.² For his part, Martin Luther (d. 1546) declared book one and two, although "useful," to be apocryphal, because they "did not count as part of the Hebrew Bible."³

¹ See *Die Septuaginta zwischen Judentum und Christentum*, ed. Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer, vol. 72, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum neuen Testament (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994); *Studien zur Septuaginta und zum hellenistischen Judentum*, ed. Robert Hanhart and Reinhard Gregor Kratz, vol. 24, Forschungen zum Alten Testament (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999); John A. Beck, *Translators as Storytellers. A Study in Septuagint Translation Technique*, vol. 25, Studies in Biblical Literature (New York et al.: Peter Lang, 2000).

² Hieronymus, Prologus in libris Salomonis de hebraeo translatis [Biblia sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem, ed. Robert Weber (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983), 957. See Dennis Brown, *Vir Trilinguis. A Study in the Biblical Exegesis of Saint Jerome* (Kampen: Kok Pharos Publisher House, 1992); Stefan Rebenich, "Jerome: the *Vir Trilinguis* and the *Hebraica Veritas*," *Vigiliae Christianae* 47 (1993): 50–77; Christoph Markschies, "Hieronymus und die *Hebraica Veritas*. Ein Beitrag zur Archäologie des protestantischen Schriftverständnisses?" in *Die Septuaginta zwischen Judentum und Christentum*, 131–81. For the Third Book of Maccabees see Sara Raup Johnson, *Historical Fictions and Hellenistic Jewish Identity. Third Maccabees in its Cultural Context*, vol. 43, Hellenistic Culture and Society (Berkeley et al.: University of California Press, 2004), and Bruce M. Metzger, "An Early Protestant Bible Containing the Third Book of Maccabees, with a List of Editions and Translations of Third Maccabees," in *Text – Wort – Glaube. Studien zur Überlieferung, Interpretation und Autorisierung biblischer Texte. Kurt Aland gewidmet*, ed. Martin Brecht, vol. 50, Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte (Berlin-New York: De Gruyter, 1980), 123–13.

³ Martin Luther, *Biblia: das ist: Die gantze Heilige Schrift: Deudsch Auff's new zugericht / D. Mart. Luth. Begnadet mit Kurfürstlicher zu Sachsen Freiheit*, gedruckt zu Wittemberg Durch Hans Lufft. M.D.XLV, Bl. CVI^b. See *Luthers Vorreden zur Bibel*, ed. Hei-

Within ancient studies, the Maccabees have been extensively examined on both a textual and an historical level.⁴ The same cannot be said for their millennia-old reception history, stretching from the *Antiquitates Judaicae* of the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (d. c. 95 C.E.) to Jonathan Kesselman's film "The Hebrew Hammer" (2003), an American farce about Jewish resistance to Santa Claus' dictatorship. The temporal and spatial dimensions of this history are intimidating.⁵ A comprehensive treatment of the theme in this sense is hardly possible; it is also not the aim of the present volume. Rather, its focus is on a particular comparative problem, approached through selected examples: the different ways the Maccabean books were used as both an arsenal (in the original sense of armory)⁶ and practical text over a range of epochs and cultures.⁷ In the following pages I will first summarize the main features of the texts' antique and medieval transmission (I) in order to then move to the historical contexts in which their transmission was received (II). Finally, I will offer a brief overview of the ten contributions chosen for this volume, which spans the times of antiquity and the Middle Ages. There, will however, be three excursions into both the Early Modern Period and more recent history, for in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the theme of the Maccabees was becoming increasingly popular.

nrich Bornkamm, vol. 1550, Kleine Vandenhoeck-Reihe (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, ³1989), 159.

⁴ See most recently *The Books of the Maccabees: History, Theology, Ideology*, ed. Géza G. Xeravits and József Zsengellér, vol. 118, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2007).

⁵ In the sense of Hans Robert Jauf, "Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft," in *Rezeptionsästhetik*, ed. Rainer Warning (Munich: utb, ⁴1994) 303:126–62.

⁶ See Notker Hammerstein, "Geschichte als Arsenal. Geschichtsschreibung im Umfeld deutscher Humanisten," in *Geschichtsbewußtsein und Geschichtsschreibung in der Renaissance*, ed. August Buck, Tibor Klaniczay and S. Katalin Németh (Leiden et al.: Brill, 1989), 19–32.

⁷ On approaches to the Bible, see *Le Moyen Age et la Bible*, ed. Pierre Riché and Guy Lobrichon, vol. 4, Bible de tous les temps (Paris: Beauchesne, 1984); *The Bible in the Medieval World. Essays in Memory of Beryl Smalley*, ed. Katherine Walsh and Diana Wood, vol. 4, Studies in Church History. Subsidia (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985); *Das Buch der Bücher – gelesen. Lesarten der Bibel in Wissenschaften und Künsten*, ed. Steffen Martus et al., vol. 13, Publikationen der Zeitschrift für Germanistik (Berlin et al.: Lang, 2006); *Die Bibel als politisches Argument. Voraussetzungen und Folgen biblizistischer Herrschaftslegitimation in der Vormoderne*, ed. Andreas Pečar, vol. 43, Beihefte der Historischen Zeitschrift (Berlin: Oldenbourg, 2007).

At this point, one anticipatory remark is in order: the Maccabean books convey no unified message, form no self-contained narrative, but tell remarkably diverse stories at different times and from different perspectives.⁸ This is especially the case for the second Maccabean book – something that already struck Martin Luther, who in the prologue to the *Ander Buch Maccabeorum* offered the following critique: “but it looks/like not one master was at work/but that it was patched together from many books.”⁹

1

The First Book of Maccabees treats the struggle of the Jews against the “heathens.” The Jews’ love of freedom is appealed to with fiery words (1 Macc 3:43): “Let us raise up the ruin of our people and let us fight for our people and the Holy Place”; and a readiness is called for to die in a struggle for faith (1 Macc 3:59): “for it is better for us to die in battle than to look upon the evils that have come upon our nation and the Holy Place.” Another of the text’s key concepts is religious zeal, animating the resistance of the freedom fighters (1 Macc 2:24–26): “and thus [Mattathias] showed forth his zeal for the Law, just as Phinehas had done in the case of Zimri the son of Salom.”¹⁰ If we follow Hermann Lichtenberger’s concise overview, the First Book of Maccabees was written in the style of the Old Testament historical accounts. In contrast, the rhetoric of the second, strongly fictional book has Greek origins,¹¹ involving an invitation in epistolary form by Jerusalem’s Jewish community to Egyptian co-religionists to celebrate

⁸ Katell Berthelot, “L’idéologie maccabéenne entre idéologie de la résistance armée et idéologie dy martyre,” *Revue des Études juives* 165 (2006): 99–122, here 101: “L’idéologie maccabéenne est donc plurielle.”

⁹ “Sihet aber / als sey es nicht ein Meister gewest / sondern zusammen geflickt aus vielen Büchern.” Martin Luther, *Biblia: das ist: Die gantze Heilige Schrift*, fol. CCXXIV^b. See *Luthers Vorreden zur Bibel*, 162.

¹⁰ William Reuben Farmer, *Maccabees, Zealots, and Josephus. An Inquiry into Jewish Nationalism in the Greco-Roman Period* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956); Martin Hengel, *Die Zeloten. Untersuchungen zur jüdischen Freiheitsbewegung in der Zeit von Herodes I. bis 70 n. Chr.*, vol. 1, *Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums* (Leiden-Köln: Brill 1976 [1961]).

¹¹ Hermann Lichtenberger, “History-writing and History-telling in First and Second Maccabees,” in *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity. The Fifth Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium*, ed. Stephen C. Barton et al., vol. 212, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 95–110.

the festival of the Temple's dedication – that is, Hanukkah – in the month of Kislev, as they themselves do (2 Macc 1:1–8). They have taken their information, the community elders explain together with Judas Maccabeus (2 Macc 1:10), from the five historical books of the Greek historian Jason of Cyrene (2 Macc 2:24).¹²

In the Second Book of Maccabees, the struggle is no longer simply against the heathens but also against the “Hellenizing” Jews (see 2 Macc 4:7–22),¹³ something Elias Bickermann (1897–1981) already drew attention to in his study, *God of the Maccabees*.¹⁴ In place of history, 2 Maccabees narrates salvational history, with the battle against separatists and heathens culminating in the self-sacrifice of Eleazar (2 Macc 6:18–31) and the martyrdom of the seven brothers and their mother (2 Macc 7:1–42), presented in apocalyptic terms.¹⁵ Alongside faith and law, the notion of *patria* here emerges as a value for which it is worth dying.¹⁶

The fourth and most recent Maccabean book offers an even more detailed account of the martyrdom of Eleazar and the seven brothers.¹⁷ In his church history, Eusebius of Caesarea (d. bet. 337–341) ascribes the text to Josephus¹⁸ – an ascription followed by later generations of

¹² No information is to be found about Jason von Kyrene in the pertinent reference works.

¹³ Jan Willem van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People. A Study of 2 and 4 Maccabees*, vol. 57, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism (Leiden et al.: Brill, 1997), 17–57.

¹⁴ Elias Bickermann, *Der Gott der Makkabäer. Untersuchungen über Sinn und Ursprung der Makkabäischen Erhebung* (Berlin: Schocken, 1937); Elias Bickerman, *The God of the Maccabees. Studies on the Meaning and Origin of the Maccabean Revolt*, vol. 32, Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity (Leiden: Brill, 1979).

¹⁵ Luigi F. Pizzolato and Chiara Somenzi, *I sette fratelli Maccabei nella chiesa antica d'occidente*, vol. 25, Studia patristica mediolanensia (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2005), 3–45.

¹⁶ 2 Macc 4:1; 5:8–9; 5:15; 7:2; 7:8; 7:21; 7:27; 8:21; 13:3; 13:11; 13:14; 14:18; 15:29.

¹⁷ André Dupont-Sommer, *Le quatrième livre des Machabées. Introduction, traduction et notes*, vol. 274, Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études (Paris: Champion, 1939), see Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 58–82, as well as Jürgen C.H. Lebram, “Die literarische Form des vierten Makkabäerbuches,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 28 (1974): 81–96; Boudewijn Dehandschutter, “Martyrium und Agon. Über die Wurzeln der Vorstellung vom ΑΓΩΝ im vierten Makkabäerbuch,” in *Die Entstehung der jüdischen Martyrologie*, ed. J. W. van Henten, vol. 38, Studia post-biblica (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 215–19; Hermann Spieckermann, *Martyrium und die Vernunft des Glaubens – Theologie als Philosophie im vierten Makkabäerbuch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004).

¹⁸ Eusebius, *The Church History*, translated with commentary by Paul L. Maier (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999), 105. Eusebius von Caesarea, *Kirchengeschichte III*, 10,

scribes. Corresponding to its mythic characteristics, the Fourth Book of Maccabees was initially transmitted mainly in Christian menologies (collections of legends). Heinrich Dörrie has counted over ninety copies, a considerable number.¹⁹

At around the same time as the writing of 4 *Maccabees*, Josephus offered the Jewish freedom fighters another monument in his *Antiquitates Judaicae*,²⁰ where he speaks, however, not of Maccabees but of Hasmoneans – the term that would be taken up by Jewish historiography. His genealogical tree begins with Hasmon, the father of Matathias.²¹ For the Jews, the memory of these heroes was kept alive by Josephus' *Antiquitates* and not the Maccabean books. Early on, we find the history translated into Arabic, Judeo-Arabic and Hebrew under the title *Josippon*.²² Josephus' *Antiquitates* was also popular among

6–8, trans. Heinrich Kraft (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997), 165. On the dating see Urs Breitenstein, *Beobachtungen zu Sprache, Stil und Gedankengut des Vierten Makkabäerbuchs* (PhD diss., Basel: Schwabe, 1976), 175, and Jan Willem van Henten, "Datierung und Herkunft des Vierten Makkabäerbuchs," in *Tradition and Re-interpretation in Jewish and Early Christian Literature. Essays in Honour of Jürgen C.H. Lebram*, ed. Jan Willem van Henten et al., vol. 36, *Studia post-biblica* (Leiden et al.: Brill, 1986), 136–49.

¹⁹ Heinrich Dörrie, *Passio ss. Machabaeorum. Die antike lateinische Übersetzung des IV. Makkabäerbuchs* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1938), 7.

²⁰ See Étienne Nodet, *La crise maccabéenne. Historiographie juive et traditions bibliques*. Préface de Marie-Françoise Baslez (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2005).

²¹ Flavius Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, trans. William Whiston (1667–1752) (wikisource.org/wiki/The_Antiquities_of_the_Jews), book 12 and 13; Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish War*, trans. G.A. Williamson (New York: Penguin, 1981), book 1, chap. 1 and 2.

²² Shulamit Sela, *The book of Josippon and its parallel versions in Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic* (PhD diss., Tel Aviv University, 1991); idem, "The Genealogy of Sefo ben Elifaz. The Importance of a Genizah Fragment for Josippon's History," in *Genizah Research After Ninety Years. The Case of Judeo-arabic*, ed. Joshua Blau and Stefan C. Reif, vol. 47, University of Cambridge Oriental Publications (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 138–43. On translation into Hebrew see Stemberger, *Geschichte der jüdischen Literatur*, 142–43: "There are two versions of the text: an edition from the eleventh century in the spirit of the chivalric ballads and the Arthurian legend (which was also circulating in Hebrew); this was published in Constantinople in 1510 and is the basis for the standard editions. It is around a third longer than the edition of Mantua (1480), which, however, itself does not represent the original." On the illustrations see Kurt Schubert, "Makkabäer- und Judithmotive in der jüdischen Buchmalerei," *Aachener Kunstblätter* 60 (1994): 333–42; Lucien Poznanski, "De Flavius Josephus au Yosippon," in *Transmission et passages en monde juif*, ed. Esther Benbassa (Paris: Publisud, 1996), 153–62, and Steven Bowman, "Dates in Sepher Yosippon," in *Pursuing the Text. Studies in Honor of Ben Zion Wacholder on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. John C. Reeves and John Kampen, vol. 184, Supplement Series of Journal for the Study of the Old Testament (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 349–59; idem, "Sefer Yosippon: History and Midrash," in *The Midrashic Imagination*.

Christian readers; but as the illuminated manuscripts from fourteenth and fifteenth century French court libraries continue to indicate, it was understood chiefly as a worldly historical work, and not as a work of salvational history (illus. 1).²³

The Fourth Book of Maccabees formed the model for the *Passio Maccabaeorum*, a Latin paraphrase of the Greek original dating from the end of the fourth century. It has been transmitted in around forty manuscripts, for the most part in libraries in Western Frankish Benedictine monasteries.²⁴ Most of these copies stem from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In the manuscript transmission, the various strands mingle. Indeed, at times we even find the *Passio* integrated into full-text Bibles.²⁵ In 1517, Erasmus of Rotterdam (d. 1536) edited the text for his Cologne-based friend Helias Mertz (d. 1527) and had it published in the Cologne printing house of Eucharius Cervicornus. It is included in this form in nearly every sixteenth and seventeenth century edition of Josephus.²⁶ Elsewhere, Erasmus took a critical view of the Old Testament's historical books.²⁷

In the rabbinic corpus, *Ekhah Rabbah*, the commentary on *Lamentations* and the *Pesikta Rabbati*, a collection of homilies from the sixth or seventh century,²⁸ transmit the story of the martyrdom of old

Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History, ed. Michael Fishbane (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 280–94.

²³ Léopold Delisle, *Recherches sur la librairie de Charles V, roi de France, 1337–1380*, Partie II: *Inventaire général des livres ayant appartenus aux rois Charles V et Charles VI et à Jean, duc de Berry. Notes et tables* (Paris: Champion, 1907), no. 891 and 892 (Charles VI.) as well as no. 210–210ter (Duc de Berry). See the illuminated manuscripts BN, ms franç. 11, 247 and 404, in addition to Guy N. Deutsch, *Iconographie de l'illustration de Flavius Josèphe au temps de Jean Fouquet*, vol. 12, *Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellenistischen Judentums* (Leiden: Brill, 1986).

²⁴ Dörrie, *Passio ss. Machabaeorum*, 66–104, reprinted without critical commentary in Pizzolato and Somenzi, *I sette fratelli Maccabei*, 130–69.

²⁵ Dörrie, *Passio ss. Machabaeorum*, 113–15 (from the 11th, 13th, and 15th centuries).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁷ Erasmus von Rotterdam, *Fürstenerziehung. 'Institutio Principis Christiani'. Die Erziehung eines christlichen Fürsten*, Einführung, Übersetzung und Bearbeitung von Anton J. Gail (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1968), 141; on this see Shimon Markish, "The Old Testament," in idem, *Erasmus and the Jews* (Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 27–47.

²⁸ Günter Stemberger, *Geschichte der jüdischen Literatur. Eine Einführung* (Munich: Beck, 1977), 88–9 and 92; Israel Lévi, "Le martyre des sept Macchabées dans la Pesikta Rabbati," *Revue des Études juives* 53 (1907): 138–41.

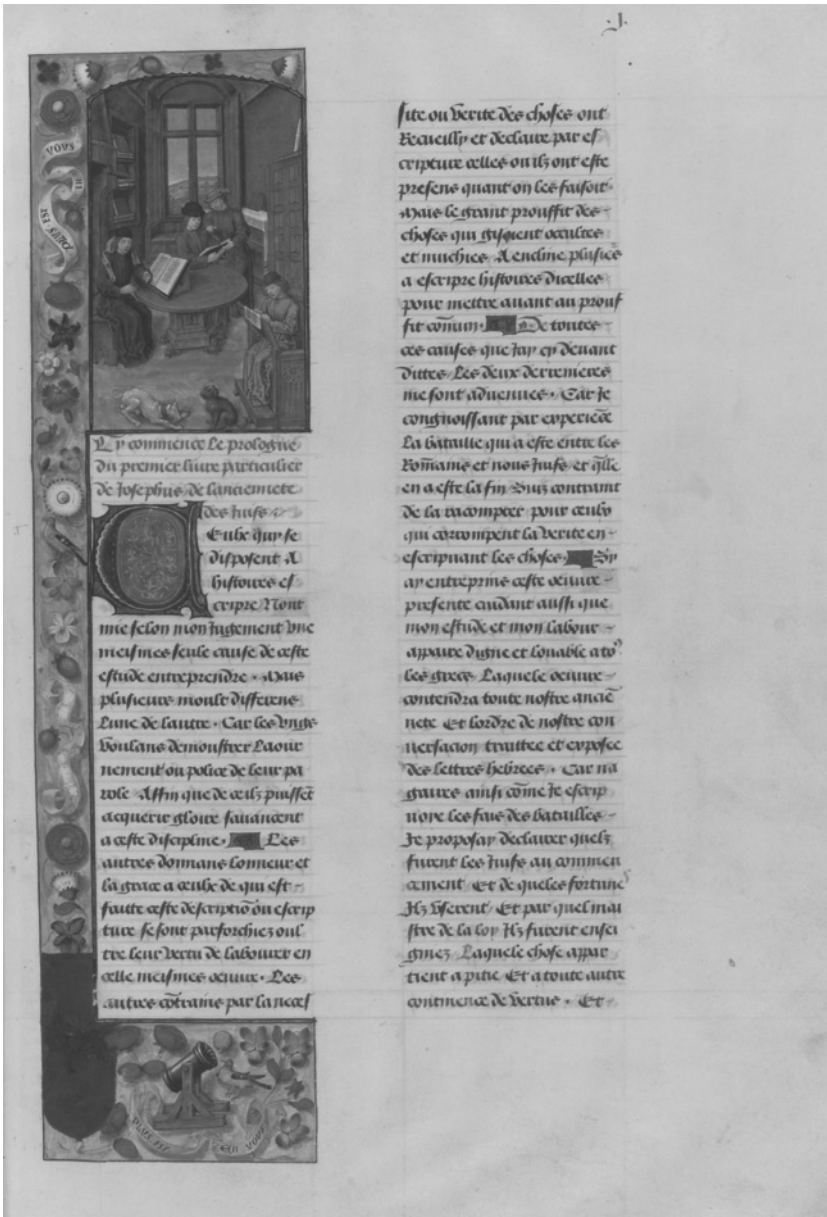


Figure 1. Flavius Josephus, *Antiquités judaïques*, ca. 1483, Paris, BN, ms. franç. 11, fol. 1^r (bibliothèque de Blois): *Cy commence le prologue du premier liure particulier de Josephus de l'anciennete des juifs.*

Eleazar and the seven brothers.²⁹ In contrast, the religious warriors from the first two Maccabean books left remarkably few traces in rabbinic literature.³⁰ This dearth of information is all the more remarkable in that 2 *Maccabees* is actually a text written by Jews for Jews to promote celebration of the Chanukah feast (2 Macc 1:9, 18).

The first two Maccabean books were only transmitted in Greek³¹ and neither was taken into the Jewish canon of Holy Scripture.³² The first translation into Hebrew is found in a composite manuscript from the second half of the thirteenth century (Bibliothèque nationale, Ms hébreu 326);³³ the second dates from the middle of the fifteenth century (*ibid.*, Ms hébreu 585).³⁴ In both cases the Jewish translators indicate

²⁹ Robert Doran, "The Martyr: a Synoptic View of the Mother and her Seven Sons," in *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism. Profiles and Paradigms*, ed. John Collins and George W.E. Nickelsburg, vol. 12, Society of Biblical Literature, Septuagint and Cognate Studies (Chico: Scholars Press, 1980), 189–205; Jan Willem van Henten and Friedrich Avemarie, *Martyrdom and Noble Death. Selected Texts from Graeco-Roman, Jewish and Christian Antiquity* (London-New York: Routledge, 2002), 132–76; Gerard Rouwhorst, "The Cult of the Seven Maccabean Brothers and their Mother in Christian Tradition," in *Saints and Role Models in Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Marcel Poorthuis and Joshua Schwartz, vol. 7, Jewish and Christian Perspectives Series (Leiden et al.: Brill, 2004), 183–204.

³⁰ Günter Stemberger, "The Maccabees in Rabbinic Tradition," in *The Scriptures and the Rolls. Studies in Honour of A.S. van der Woude on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, ed. García Martínez et al., vol. 49, Supplements Vetus Testamentum (Leiden et al.: Brill, 1992), 193–203, here 201: "It is astonishing how little information about the Maccabees is to be found in early rabbinic writings. It is only later on that more details emerge."

³¹ In his *Prologus in libro Regum [Biblia sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem]*, 365, Hieronymus asserts that 1 Maccabees was based on a Hebrew original, 2 Maccabees being written in Greek. But until now researchers have not identified such a Hebrew version.

³² *Hebrew Bible, Old Testament*, vol. 2, *From the beginnings to the Middle Ages (until 1300)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000). Most Christian scholars knew that the rabbis had not incorporated the Maccabean books into the biblical canon through the *Etymologiarum siue Originum* VI, 1.9 of Isidor of Seville. Cf. Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God. Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

³³ Stemberger, "The Maccabees in Rabbinic Tradition," 203. The unknown southern Italian author explains that he borrowed the original text for his translation from a Christian library. On the translations in general see Jean-Pierre Rothschild, "Motivations et méthodes des traducteurs hébreux," in *Traduction et traducteurs de l'Antiquité tardive au XIV^e siècle*, ed. Jacqueline Hamesse and Marta Fattori, vol. 11, *Rencontres de cultures dans la philosophie médiévale* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1990), 279–302.

³⁴ Jean-Pierre Rothschild, "Une pièce tardive à verser au dossier médiéval des Livres des Maccabées," in *Biblische und jüdische Studien. Festschrift für Paolo Sacchi*, ed. Angelo Vivian, vol. 29, *Judentum und Umwelt* (Frankfurt/M. et al.: Peter Lang, 1990), 545–74, here 548; see *Bibliothèques de France et d'Israël. Manuscrits de petit format*

they used Christian originals. Indeed, the younger of the two offers the following details: “I, the one who is writing, received this here in the south [of Portugal / Spain], in the year 5202 of creation [1441/1442], from the mouth of a learned non-Jew who found it written in one of the books of error they name Mishaël.”

As the Austrian Judaic scholar Günter Stemberger has indicated, the few Jewish commentaries on the Maccabees mainly focused on the Hasmoneans as freedom fighters. They were also recalled, albeit for the most part indirectly, in sermons for Chanukah, among others the *Pesikta Rabbati*.³⁵ Jewish liturgical poetry, we are informed, also only vaguely refers to the events, with exception of a twelfth century Ashkenazic *piyyut* (liturgical prayer).³⁶ The Book of Judith was more important for the Chanukah feast,³⁷ Jewish writing tying together that narrative complex with the Hasmonean narrative.³⁸

2

In the history of religious warfare, the Maccabean books occupy a key position – this being the longstanding historical consensus.³⁹ As Egon Flaig has recently confirmed, here for the first time in history eternal salvation was promised those ready to die for their faith

jusqu'à 1470, ed. Malachi Beit-Arié and Colette Sirat, vol. 2, 1, *Manuscripts médiévaux en caractères hébraïques* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 1979), 77.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 198–99.

³⁶ Elisabeth Hollender, “Zur Beschreibung der Makkabäer in mittelalterlichen Piyyutim zu Hannukkah,” in *We-Zo't Le-Angelo. Raccolta di studi giudaici in memoria di Angelo Vivian*, ed. Giulio Busi (Bologna: Fattoadarte, 1993), 263–74.

³⁷ Elijah Kitov, *Das jüdische Jahr, Gesetz und Brauch*, vol. 1: *Rosch Chodesch, Chanukka, Tu B'shvat, Purim* (Zurich: Morascha, 1987), 35–73. The Jewish story of the holiday's origins is somewhat different than the version in 2 Maccabees; see S. Stein, “The Liturgy of Hanukka and the First Two Books of Maccabees,” *The Journal of Jewish Studies* 5 (1954): 100–106. Étienne Nodet, “La dédicace, les Maccabées et le messie,” *Revue biblique* 93 (1986): 321–75, observes that over time the explicit relation to the Maccabees disappeared. On the later modifications of the festival, see Eliezer Don-Yehiya, “Hanukkah and the Myth of the Maccabees in Zionist Ideology and Israeli Society,” *The Jewish Journal of Sociology* 34 (1992): 5–23.

³⁸ Mira Friedman, “The Metamorphoses of Judith,” *Jewish Art* 12/13 (1986/87): 225–46.

³⁹ Ernst H. Kantorowicz, “*Pro patria mori* in Medieval Political Thought,” *The American Historical Review* 56 (1951): 472–92; idem, *Die zwei Körper des Königs. The King's Two Bodies. Eine Studie zur politischen Theologie des Mittelalters* (Munich: dtv, 1990), 241–78.

(2 Macc 7:9).⁴⁰ But here the readiness involves martyrdom, not death in battle. In this respect, early Christian religious struggle can itself be distinguished from Islamic *jihad*.⁴¹ In 2 Maccabees, these two forms of religious attestation, dying for faith (martyrdom) and killing for faith, are placed loosely alongside each other; there is no apparent effort to form a synthesis. In the reception history of the Maccabean books as well, for a long time martyrdom and religious war took separate paths. Without covering material discussed in the following chapters, I will now briefly discuss this process.

Initially, both Jews and Christians were interested in the most recent strand of the Maccabean story – in passive martyrdom, not armed resistance. In fact, the Christians stylized Eleazar, the Maccabean mother, and the seven brothers into prototypes of the Christian martyrs. The Maccabees thus served both Origen and Eusebius of Caesarea as models for recounting the passion of the martyrs of Lyon and Vienne in 177.⁴² Thematic overlapping with the description of the massacre of Polycarp in 156/57 is also apparent.⁴³

The beginnings of an independent cult of the Maccabees can be traced to the late fourth century C.E. in Asia Minor, with the ancient Syrian city of Antioch – founded by the Seleucids and thus playing a central role in the Maccabean books – apparently the oldest cultic center.⁴⁴ From Antioch, the cult wandered, together with the venerated bones, to Constantinople and then Rome. Other cities considered to have been centers for early veneration of the Maccabees are Geneva,

⁴⁰ Egon Flaig, “‘Heiliger Krieg’. Auf der Suche nach einer Typologie,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 285 (2007): 265–302, here 281.

⁴¹ Albrecht Noth, “Der ‘Kampf des Muslim für seine Religion’ (Ġihād): Seine Grundlegung und seine Ausformung in der Geschichte (bis ca. 1300),” in *Krieg in Mittelalter und Renaissance*, ed. Hans Hecker, vol. 39, *Studia humaniora* (Brühl: Droste Verlag, 2005), 93–106.

⁴² Martha Vinson, “Gregory Nazianzen’s Homily 15 and the Genesis of the Christian Cult of the Maccabean Martyrs,” *Byzantion* 64 (1994): 166–92, here 173–4, in any event offers the following critique: “It is worth pointing out that nowhere in the account of the martyrdoms at Lyons are the Maccabees mentioned by name and that references to the New Testament outnumber those to the Old by about five to one.”

⁴³ On the origins of the Christian martyrs’ cult, much has been written in the wake of W.H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church. A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1967); see among others Raphaëlle Ziadé, *Les martyrs Maccabées: de l’histoire juive au culte chrétien. Les homélies de Grégoire de Nazianze et de Jean Chrysostome*, vol. 80, *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae* (Leiden et al.: Brill, 2007).

⁴⁴ Ziadé, *Les martyrs Maccabées*, 107–35.

Lyon, and Cologne.⁴⁵ Not all stations of this cultic wandering have been researched to the same degree.

Can Christians venerate Jews? Starting, as well, in the late fourth century, this question preoccupied generations of Christian scholars.⁴⁶ Veneration meant acceptance into the calendar of saints, hence liturgical veneration.⁴⁷ Not all the scholars concerned appear to have agreed to this, but we are only informed of the arguments of these opponents through writings of the proponents. The critics – including some Jews – are said to have protested loudly that the Maccabees did not die for Jesus. But the proponents did not accept this reasoning.⁴⁸ Augustine (d. 430), for example, replied they were Christians⁴⁹ and churchmen like John Chrysostom (d. 407) went so far as to view the Maccabean martyrdom as surpassing that of the Christian blood witnesses,⁵⁰ a view taken up later by Pope Gregory the Great (d. 604).⁵¹

⁴⁵ Françoise Descombes, “La topographie chrétienne de Vienne des origines à la fin du VII^e siècle,” in *Les martyrs de Lyon* (177), vol. 575, Colloques internationaux du centre national de la recherche scientifique (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1978), 267–77; Jean-François Reynaud, “Les premiers édifices de culte à Lyon: IV^e–VII^e siècles,” in *ibid.*, 279–87.

⁴⁶ According to Vinson, “Gregory Nazianzen’s Homily 15,” 176, “In fact, Homily 15 [of Gregory of Nyssa] marks a turning point in the history of the Maccabean martyrs. Before this sermon, the Maccabees are merely faces in a crowd of Old Testament exempla which include Daniel and the three Assyrian youths while after it, as the homiletic literature from the last decades from the fourth century attests, they have been singled out from the pack as the sole beneficiaries not only of encomia but of a well-established cult.”

⁴⁷ Henri-Irénée Marrou, “Les saints de l’ancien testament au martyrologe romain,” in *Memorial Joseph Chaine*, vol. 5, Bibliothèque de la faculté catholique de théologie de Lyon (Lyon: Faculté catholique, 1950), 281–90; Wilhelm Bacher, “Jüdische Märtyrer im christlichen Kalender,” in *Wissenschaft des Judentums im deutschen Sprachbereich. Ein Querschnitt*, ed. Kurt Wilhelm (Tübingen: Mohr, 1967) 2: 595–607.

⁴⁸ Marcel Simon, “Les saints d’Israël dans la dévotion de l’Église ancienne,” in *Recherches d’histoire judéo-chrétienne*, vol. 6, Études juives (Paris-La Haye: Mouton, 1962), 154–80, here 159; Philippe Blaudeau, “Faire mémoire des Maccabées à l’époque de la controverse chalcédonienne (451–520): remarques sur les enjeux d’une célébration disputée,” *Antiquité tardive* 13 (2005): 351–61.

⁴⁹ Augustinus sermo 300, in Migne, PL 38, col. 1376–80, here 1377. See Klaus Schreiner, *Märtyrer, Schlachtenhelfer, Friedensstifter. Krieg und Frieden im Spiegel mittelalterlicher und frühneuzeitlicher Heiligenverehrung*, vol. 8, The Otto-von-Freising-Vorlesungen der Katholischen Universität Eichstätt (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 2000), 9.

⁵⁰ Gus George Christo, *Martyrdom According to John Chrysostom. “To Live is Christ, To Die is Gain”* (Lewiston N.Y.: Mellen University Press, 1997), 44, 95–7.

⁵¹ Gregorius Magnus, *Homiliae in evangelia III*, 3, ed. Raymond Étaix, vol. 141, Corpus christianorum. Series latina (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 213.

Even at the start of the twelfth century, the Cistercian Bernhard of Clairvaux (d. 1153) posed the question of “what, then, the fathers meant when they decided...to offer for the Maccabees alone an annual celebration in the church with the same veneration as for our martyrs.”⁵² Without citing names, Bernhard refers to the positions of Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gaudentius of Brescia;⁵³ he argues mainly in terms of form.⁵⁴ The form (*forma*) of the Maccabean martyrdom, he indicates, was the same as that of the Christian counterpart: it involved a profession of faith, a *confessio veritatis*.⁵⁵ For that reason, the Maccabees are worthy of veneration. Substantively, however, the martyrs are different, one group dying for their *cultus*, the other for *justitia*.

In general, the medieval texts refer not to *cultus* but to *lex*, law, or *legis observatio*, those who observe the law. This is the case in the *Legenda Aurea* of the Dominican Jacob of Voragine (d. 1298), the most frequently copied book of the Middle Ages.⁵⁶ But for this author, “defense of the law” (*defensio legis*) is merely one of four reasons the Maccabees deserved to be venerated.⁵⁷ His arguments in this respect dominate the entry for August 1st;⁵⁸ but this only in the original, Latin version of the Maccabee legend meant for clerics, while the German translation of his text narrates another story, summarizing the martyrdom of the mother and seven brothers.⁵⁹ The arguments are drawn from the *Historia Scholastica* of Peter Comestor (d. 1178) and the *Summa de Ecclesiasticis Officiis* of John Beleth, two widespread

⁵² Letter 98, in Bernhard von Clairvaux, *Sämtliche Werke. Lateinisch/Deutsch*, ed. Gerhard B. Winkler, vol. 2 (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 1992), 738–9: “Quaeris itaque, quidnam visum Patribus fuerit, ut solis ex omnibus antiquis iustis singulari quodam privilegio Machabaeis annuam celebritatem pari cum nostris martyribus veneratione decernerent in Ecclesia sollemniter exhibendam.”

⁵³ Ariane B. Schneider, *Jüdisches Erbe in christlicher Tradition. Eine kanongeschichtliche Untersuchung zur Bedeutung und Rezeption der Makkabäerbücher in der Alten Kirche des Ostens* (PhD diss., Heidelberg, 2000).

⁵⁴ Bernhard von Clairvaux, letter 98, 738–9.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 740–1.

⁵⁶ Remarkably, the translation by Richard Benz (1884–1966) lacks the corresponding entry. Dated from 1925, the translation is thus older than the calendrical reform.

⁵⁷ *Jacobi a Voragine Legenda aurea vulgo historia lombardica dicta*, ed. [Johann Georg] Theodor Graesse (Neudruck 1969 [Dresden-Leipzig 1846]), 454–5. See Alain Boureau, *La légende dorée: le système narratif de Jacques de Voragine (d. 1298)* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1984).

⁵⁸ The Feast of St. Peter's Chains – the main festivity of the day – comes directly after the entry for the festival of the Maccabees, which shows how closely Voragine here leans on the Roman calendar.

⁵⁹ *Die 'Elsässische Legenda Aurea'*, vol. 1: *Das Normalcorpus*, ed. Ulla Williams and Werner Williams-Krapp (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1980), no. 109, 486–7.

reference works for clerics, both stemming from the twelfth century.⁶⁰ The question of whether Christians may venerate Jews thus appears to have been present in the conceptual world of Christian scholars over the centuries. Objections to such veneration would again be raised, but in a markedly different spirit.⁶¹

In the early medieval literature relatively little can be read concerning the Maccabees as freedom fighters. Scholars only began to study the Old Testament – and with it the *Books of the Maccabees* – more intensely in the ninth century. The books were sometimes read literally, which is to say historically, sometimes allegorically, and sometimes typologically or Christologically, this latter approach repeatedly centering on the martyrdom of Eleazar and the seven Maccabean brothers. Already Augustine had interpreted their narrative of suffering as a prefiguration of the Passion.⁶² Initially, the mother of the Maccabees stood for the Church. Later, she was elevated to a prototype of the suffering mother of Jesus, as shown in a devotional painting from the second half of the fifteenth century, originally located in the Dominican convent of St. Gertrude in Cologne.⁶³

The theologian Rabanus Maurus (d. 856)⁶⁴ and pseudo-Hugh or pseudo-Richard of St. Victor both offered allegorical interpretations of the first two Maccabean books, the latter interpretation appearing in *Allegoriae in Vetus Testamentum*.⁶⁵ Rabanus' Maccabean commentary entered into twelfth century biblical glosses. His two dedicatory texts, one to archdeacon Gerold, court chaplain to Louis the Pious (d. 840), the other to Louis the German (d. 876), together formed the

⁶⁰ *Iohannis Beleth summa de ecclesiasticis officiis*, ed. Heribert Douteil, vol. 41, *Corpus christianorum*, Continuatio medievalis (Turnhout: Brepols, 1976), 277–8. According to Beleth the reading of the Maccabean books takes place in October.

⁶¹ Robert I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society. Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950–1250* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987).

⁶² Schreiner, *Jüdische Märtyrer*, 19–22.

⁶³ *Katalog der Altkölner Malerei*, ed. Frank Günter Zehnder (Cologne: Kataloge des Wallraf-Richartz-Museums, 1990): 11, 163–4.

⁶⁴ *Beati Rabani Mauri Fuldensis abbatis et Mogunti archiepiscopi coemmentaria in libros Machabæorum* (circa annum 840), in Migne, PL 109, col. 1126–1256; see Susanne Wittekind, “Die Makkabäer als Vorbild des geistlichen Kampfes. Eine kunsthistorische Deutung des Leidener Makkabäer-Codex Perirone 17,” *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 37 (2003): 47–71.

⁶⁵ Hugonis de s. Victore, *Allegoriae in vetus testamentum*, in Migne, PL 175, col. 748–50. See Sönke Jaek, “*Ich gelère si Durndarten*. Schwerter in der höfischen Dichtung,” in *Adelige und bürgerliche Erinnerungskulturen des Spätmittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Werner Rösener, vol. 8, *Formen der Erinnerung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 58–78.

Ici comence le liure des
 machabees. Cist furent long
 comitateors por lor gent. &
 por lor loi. & habiterent en
 une cite pres de ierlm. que
 lon apeloit modin. for la
 roy & de grant aier. ensi
 com uos portes oir en lator
 re. la quel fu entallee. por
 lor grant loier. & por lor
 grant proice qui en eaus
 fu. fu entallee en lor nom
 Cist furent long tens apres
 le rei dant. & hedoras le ppe
 en cui tens la cite de ierlm
 & le temple fu reedefiez.
 lxx. ans. apres ce que Ya
 buchodonosor. lor destruite
 & gallee. si com om crainte
 en la fin don liure des rois.



Figure 2. Bible abrégée en français, dite Bible de Saint-Jean d'Acre, Paris, BN, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, RES MS-5211, fol. 339. The manuscript has probably been ordered by Saint Louis during his journey at Acre in the years 1250–1254.

standard prologue to the Maccabean books in the “Paris Bible.”⁶⁶ In this manner, the first Middle German adaptation of the Biblical material, attributed to the German Order, itself began with a translation of the two dedicatory texts.⁶⁷

To follow the French Carolingian specialist Pierre Riché: throughout the entire medieval period, the leading political strata, clergy and laity, used Holy Scripture to endow their political ideas, demands, and actions with authority.⁶⁸ Important Old Testament figures in the context of the question of rule were Moses, David, and Solomon, each of them standing for another concept of authority.⁶⁹ In the second half of the ninth century, authors hesitantly began to contemplate the heroic figure of Judas Maccabeus, who died to defend the law. If we follow Riché, what emerged as the finest praise a warrior could receive was to be compared with Judas Maccabeus.⁷⁰ The *Annales Fuldenses* thus refer to Robert the Strong (d. 866) as “the Maccabeus of our time – as *alter quodammodo nostris temporibus Machabeus*;⁷¹ and a century later, the Saxon chronicler Widukind of Corvey (d. after 973) leans very heavily on 1 and 2 Maccabees whenever he depicts warlike action and records battle speeches in his *Res Gestae Saxoniae*.⁷² The comparison *ille alter Machabaeus* remained alive far past the Middle Ages.⁷³

⁶⁶ Laura Light, “French Bibles c. 1200–1230: a New Look at the Origin of the Paris Bible,” in *The Early Medieval Bible. Its Production, Decoration and Use*, ed. Richard Gameson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 155–76.

⁶⁷ *Das Buch der Maccabäer in mitteldeutscher Bearbeitung*, ed. Karl Helm (Tübingen: Literarischer Verein Stuttgart, 1904), 1: “Sidir ouch diz geschach alsus: ein meister der hiez Rabanus, der legte us die buch beide mit merclicher underscheide, wie man die buch vornemen sol daz sie vorstentlich werden wol.”

⁶⁸ Pierre Riché, “La Bible et la vie politique dans le haut Moyen Age,” in *Le Moyen Age et la Bible*, ed. Pierre Riché and Guy Lobrichon (Paris: Beauchesne, 1984), 385–400, here 385.

⁶⁹ Philippe Buc, *L’ambiguïté du livre. Prince, pouvoir, et peuples dans les commentaires de la Bible au moyen âge*, vol. 95, *Théologie historique* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1994).

⁷⁰ Riché, “La Bible et la vie politique”, 397.

⁷¹ *Annales Fuldenses sive annales regni Francorum orientalis*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, vol. 7, *Scriptores rerum germanicarum* (Hannover: Hahn, 1891), 66.

⁷² Hagen Keller, “*Machabaeorum pugna*. Zum Stellenwert eines biblischen Vorbildes in Widukinds Deutung der ottonischen Königsherrschaft,” in *Iconologia Sacra. Mythos, Bildkunst und Dichtung in der Religions- und Sozialgeschichte Alteuropas. Festschrift für Karl Hauck zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. Hagen Keller and Nikolaus Staubach, vol. 23, *Arbeiten zur Frühmittelalterforschung* (Berlin-New York: de Gruyter, 1994), 417–37.

⁷³ *Helmholds Slavenchronik*, ed. Bernhard Schmeidler, vol. 32, MGH. *Scriptores rerum germanicarum* (Hannover: Hahn, 1937), 46: “alter ille Machabeus”; *Annales Marbacenses*, ed. Hermann Bloch, vol. 9, MGH. *Scriptores rerum germanicarum*

Riché concludes his discussion of the Bible and political life in the High Middle Ages as follows: "In the Carolingian period, the Maccabees are the most famous of the Biblical heroes. And they remain so through the entire Middle Ages."⁷⁴ But, he notes, a full-length study is lacking, and is called for in that the Maccabees contributed in an essential way to what later was termed the *idéal chevaleresque*.⁷⁵ And in fact, a new chapter in Christian "Maccabee reception" began with the Crusades,⁷⁶ crusade, knighthood, and the Maccabees henceforth comprising a nigh indissoluble trinity (illus. 2).

The papal crusading propaganda of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries is full of appeals to follow the Maccabean example and not only fight but also die for one's faith. As Ursula Schwerin explained some seventy years ago, the popes invoked the Maccabees whenever the public's "firing up for battle" was meant to be especially urgent.⁷⁷ Since its beginnings, scholarship on the Crusades has been obliged to concern itself with the biblical models and prototypes of its historical material more intensively than many other historiographical branches. It is thus surprising how few Maccabean traces Paul Alphandéry has found in the chronicles reporting on the First Crusade.⁷⁸ The restraint

(Hannover-Leipzig: Hahn, 1907), 32: "Rûdolfus tamquam alter Machabeus"; *Chronicon Moguntinum*, ed. Karl Hegel, vol. 20, *Scriptores rerum germanicarum* (Hannover: Hahn, 1885), 57: "qui similis Iude Machabeo pro sua gente et iustitia occubuit."

⁷⁴ Riché, "La Bible et la vie politique", 398.

⁷⁵ Riché was not aware of the thesis of Robert L. McGrath, *The Romance of the Maccabees in Medieval Art and Literature* (PhD diss., Princeton, 1963), which has never been published.

⁷⁶ Christoph Auffahrt, "Die Makkabäer als Modell für die Kreuzfahrer. Usurpationen und Brüche in der Tradition eines jüdischen Heiligenideals. Eine religionswissenschaftlicher Versuch zur Kreuzzugeschatologie," in *Tradition und Translation. Zum Problem der interkulturellen Übersetzbarkeit religiöser Phänomene. Festschrift für Carsten Colpe zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Christoph Elsas et al. (Berlin-New York: de Gruyter, 1994), 362–390; René Richtscheid, "Die Kreuzfahrer als *novi Machabei*. Zur Verwendungsweise der Makkabäermetaphorik in chronikalischen Quellen der Rhein- und Maaslande zur Zeit der Kreuzzüge," in "*Campana pulsante convocati*," *Festschrift anlässlich der Emeritierung von Prof. Dr. Alfred Haverkamp*, ed. Frank G. Hirschmann and Gerd Mentgen (Trier: Kliomedia, 2005), 473–86.

⁷⁷ Ursula Schwerin, *Die Aufrufe der Päpste zur Befreiung des Heiligen Landes von den Anfängen bis zum Ausgang Innozenz IV. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der kurialen Kreuzzugspropaganda und der päpstlichen Epistolographie*, vol. 301, *Historische Studien* (Berlin: Ebering, 1937), 60. The conclusions of Dana Carleton Munro, "The Speech of Pope Urban II. at Clermont 1095," *American Historical Review* 11 (1906): 231–42, are less clear cut.

⁷⁸ Paul Alphandéry, "Les citations bibliques chez les historiens de la première croisade," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 90 (1929): 139–57.

shown by authors to mention the Maccabees outside the crusading propaganda seems to have been initially greater than has been presumed – this Elizabeth Lapina's conclusion as well in her contribution to this volume.

Be this as it may, fiery appeals to die and kill for faith markedly increased during the thirteenth century.⁷⁹ The crusading texts of both Jacques de Vitry (d. 1240) and Humbert of Romans (d. 1277), Dominican master general, bear witness to this.⁸⁰ Even in 1332 the *Directorium ad Philippum Regem*, a crusading appeal addressed, as the title indicates, to French king Philip VI (1328–1350), gave the Maccabean example central importance.⁸¹ Philip is addressed as “second Machabeus,”⁸² and the Maccabees praised for having fought for their country's freedom and freed Jerusalem.⁸³ In any event, the outbreak of the Hundred Years' War prevented a new French crusade.

Many scholars have already pointed to the ties between the German Order and the “spirit of the Maccabees.” Pope Honorius III (1216–1227) praised members of the Order – as had earlier Pope Celestin II the Templers – as *novi sub tempore gratiae Machabei* (“the new Maccabees in the age of grace”).⁸⁴ And Pope Gregory IX (1227–1241) is

⁷⁹ Ernst Kantorowicz, “*Pro patria mori*,” assembled the relevant passages years ago.

⁸⁰ Penny J. Cole, *The Preaching of the Crusades to the Holy Land, 1095–1276* (Cambridge/Mass: Medieval Academy of America, 1991), 28–30, 49, 134, and 206.

⁸¹ Brochard, “*Directorium ad passagium faciendum*,” in *Recueil des historiens des croisades. Documents arméniens*, vol. 2 (Paris: Impression Royale, 1906), 367–517 and cxliii–clxxvi; on the unexplained authorship see art. “Guillaume Adam, missionnaire,” in *Histoire littéraire de la France* 35 (1921), 283, and Ch. Kohler, “Quel est l'auteur du *Directorium ad passagium faciendum*?,” *Revue de l'Orient latin* 12 (1911): 104–11; on Philipp VI's crusade plans, see Gottfried Dürnhölder, *Die Kreuzzugspolitik unter Papst Johann XXII* (Straßburg: Heitz, 1913), 58–68, and Steven Runciman, *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge* (Munich: Beck, 2003), 1218–19.

⁸² Brochard, “*Directorium ad passagium faciendum*,” 368.

⁸³ *Ibid.* 400: “Machabei civitatem sanctam Jherusalem de manu hostium salvaverunt, legem de potestate gencium extorserunt, [pro libert]ate patrie pugnave[runt], inim]icos constanter et viriliter [sep]ius prostraverunt et multis periculis se dederunt.”

⁸⁴ For pope Celestin II's identical praise of the Templers see *Papsturkunden für Templer und Johanniter*, ed. Rudolf Hiestand, vol. 1, Vorarbeiten zum Oriens pontificius (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), nos. 3, 215. The prologue of the Order's statutes also evokes the Maccabees. See *Die Statuten des deutschen Ordens nach den ältesten Handschriften*, ed. Max Perlbach (Halle: Niemeyer, 1890), 25: “Wir gedenken ouch des lobelichen strites, der wert vor Gote was, der rittere, di dā heizent Machābei, wie stercliche die durch ir ê unde umme den gelouben striten mit den heiden, die sie twingen wolden, daz sie Gotes verlougenten, unde mit sīner helfe sie sô gar uberwunden und vertilgeten, daz sie hēten heunreint, unde den vride macheten wider in dem lande.”

said to have appealed to them as follows (evoking 1 Macc 3:58–59): “Arm yourselves and be strong, sons, be ready for battle against the heathens in order to despoil us and our holy place; for it would be better for us to die in battle than view the misfortune of our country and holy place.”⁸⁵

Henry of Latvia (d. after 1259) had already worked intensively with the Maccabean books in his *Chronicon Livoniae* – this, however, not thematically but stylistically. In Henry’s report, one battle follows the next; everything else seems out of sight and mind. Leonid Arbusow has counted 149 passages where he uses formulations from 1 Maccabees.⁸⁶ But we find the first explicit references to the Maccabees later on, in Peter of Dusburg’s chronicle of the German Order, *Chronicon Terrae Prussiae* (written around 1326), which was then translated by Nikolaus of Jeroschin, appearing in the 1340s as *Die Kronike von Pruzinlant*. In that form, the work attracted relatively broad interest; twenty manuscripts and manuscript fragments of the later work are extant.⁸⁷

Peter of Dusburg’s *Chronicon* above all has recourse to the Maccabees in the chapters expounding on the victory-bringing power of prayer and “the physical and spiritual weapons” through which the Order’s brothers are to liberate the Holy Land from the hands of the unbelievers: long shield, sword, round shield, and armor.⁸⁸ The Maccabean books here help the chronicler interpret the weapons allegorically,

⁸⁵ Peter von Dusburg, *Chronik des Preußenlandes*, trans. and comm. Klaus Scholz and Dieter Wojtecki, vol. 25, *Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984), 64–5.

⁸⁶ Leonid Arbusow, “Das entlehnte Sprachgut in Heinrichs *Chronicon Livoniae*. Ein Beitrag zur Sprache mittelalterlicher Chronistik,” *Deutsches Archiv* 8 (1951): 100–52, here: 111. The preference is explained by the “bellicose contents of these biblical books,” “since as a writer on the crusades our chronicler also wrote his missionary chronicle as a history of warfare.”

⁸⁷ Evald Johansson, *Die Deutschordenschronik des Nicolaus von Jeroschin. Eine sprachliche Untersuchung mit komparativer Analyse der Wortbildung. Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung der Ordenssprache und ihrer Rolle in der Entwicklung der nhd. Schriftsprache*, vol. 36, *Lunder germanistische Forschungen* (Lund-Kopenhagen: Gleerup, 1964), 33–5; Udo Arnold, art. “Nikolaus von Jeroschin OT,” in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon* 6 (1987), cols. 1081–89. According to Mary Fischer the author used the Maccabean books 25 times, the psalms – the second most cited book – only 16 times. See Mary Fischer, *Di himels rote. The Idea of Christian Chivalry in the Chronicles of the Teutonic Order*, vol. 525, *Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik* (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1991), 117; idem, “Biblical Heroes and the Uses of Literature: The Teutonic Order in the Late Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries,” in *Crusade and Conversion on the Baltic Frontier 1150–1500*, ed. Alan V. Murray (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 261–85.

⁸⁸ Peter von Dusburg, *Chronik des Preußenlandes*, 86–91.

though whether he knew the above-mentioned *Allegoriae in Vetus Testamentum* is unclear, the possibility is certainly present.⁸⁹ In 1935, Helmut Bauer argued that Peter's exclusive praise of Judas Maccabeus as a model points to the Order's "unique" status⁹⁰ – a viewpoint too narrowly oriented toward Germany and the German Order, for in reality,⁹¹ French adaptations of 1 and 2 Maccabees are also tied to the Crusades.⁹² Towards the end of the thirteenth century – evidently the heyday of the Maccabee reception – a "knights' mirror" blends with the crusading idea in the version of the *Chevalerie de Judas Macabé* (1285) that originated at the court of the Count of Flanders.⁹³ In the judgment of the French biblical researcher Jean Bonnard, this amounts to an epic song of battle far removed from its Old Testament model: "Stories about dueling or battle orders make up more than two thirds of this extensive verse epic, in which the sword almost always does the speaking."⁹⁴ Jean Robert Smeets maintains that the work's translator,

⁸⁹ Jaroslaw Wenta, art. "Peter von Dusburg," in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon* 11 (2004), cols. 1188–92.

⁹⁰ Helmut Bauer, *Peter von Dusburg und die Geschichtsschreibung des Deutschen Ordens im 14. Jahrhundert in Preußen*, vol. 272, Historische Studien (Berlin: Ebering, 1935), 33.

⁹¹ See inter alia Gottfried Hagen, "Dit is dat boich van der stede Colne," in *Die Chroniken der niederrheinischen Städte. Cöln*, vol. 12, Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1875), 190; Johann von Victring, *Das Buch gewisser Geschichten I*, 4, 7, 8, trans. Walter Friedensburg, vol. 86, Die Geschichtsschreiber der deutschen Vorzeit (Leipzig: Dyk, 1888), 72–7, 88–98.

⁹² In this context, the thirteenth century crusaders' manuscript now located in Padua's Biblioteca capitolare should also be mentioned; the ms. contains the Maccabean books alongside the psalms and lesser prophets. See Susanne J. Warma, "Mattathias Slaying the Apostate: an Uncommon Subject from the First Book of Maccabees," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 136 (1994): 13–22, here 18.

⁹³ *La chevalerie de Judas Machabee de Gautier de Belleperche (et de Pieros du Riés)*, ed. Jean-Robert Smeets, 2 vols. (Te Assen: van Gorcum & Comp., 1991). See Mary D. Stanger, "Literary Patronage at the Court of Flanders," *French Studies* 11 (1957): 214–27. A prose version must have been composed at the court of Burgundy at roughly the same time; see *Chevalerie de Judas Macabé*, ed. idem, vol. 10, van Gorcum literaire bibliotheek (Te Assen: van Gorcum, 1955), XVII–XVIII. Critical in this respect: David A. Trotter, "Judas Maccabaeus, Charlemagne and the Oriflamme," *Medium Aevum* 54 (1985): 127–9. The *Chevalerie*, Trotter argues, contains no direct reference to the Crusade.

⁹⁴ Jean Bonnard, *Les traductions de la Bible en vers français au moyen âge* (Paris: Champion, 1884 [Geneva: Slakine Reprints, 1967]), 170; Samuel Berger, *La bible française au moyen âge. Étude sur les plus anciennes versions de la bible écrites en prose de langue d'oïl* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1884 [Geneva: Slakine Reprints, 1967]). Leaning heavily on Berger: Guy de Poerck and Rika van Deyck, "La bible et l'activité traductrice dans les pays romans avant 1300," in *Grundriss der romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters*, ed. Hans Robert Jauf, vol. 6, La littérature didactique, allégorique et satirique, (Heidelberg: Winter, 1968), 1: 21–48.

Gautier de Belleperche, who wrote in first half of the thirteenth century, worked Jewish narrative material into the text.⁹⁵

In any event, the connection between crusades and Maccabees took its most enduring form in the *Benedictio Novi Militis* (*Benediction of New Knights*) in the version of Wilhelm Durandus' (d. 1296) *Pontificale*. In this text, the new knight is blessed with the following words:

Holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God Who commands all things alone and justly rules over everything, Who has allowed human beings to use weapons in order to prevail over evil and preserve justice according to Your will, and who has wished that war be waged to protect the people....Devoutly, oh Lord, we appeal to Your clemency that You grant this Your servant, who is taking on the yoke of military service, just as You granted the youth David the strength to overcome Goliath and let Judas Maccabeus triumph over the wildness of peoples that did not invoke Your name – that You grant with divine piety the strength and courage to defend faith and justice,...love, modesty, perseverance, obedience, and patience....⁹⁶

According to Ernst Kantorowicz, during the Flemish wars the French kings, above Philip IV (1285–1314), had their imaginations fired by papal crusading propaganda. Notably in this respect, the “Sermon Held When the King of France Went to War,” delivered shortly after the Battle of Courtrai (1302), begins with 1 Macc 3:19–22: “For victory in battle standeth not in the multitude of an host, but strength is from Heaven. They come unto us in fullness of insolence and lawlessness, to destroy us and our wives and our children, for to spoil us; but we fight for our lives and our laws.”⁹⁷ The unknown preacher spurred his public to battle against the “heathens” with 2 Macc 15:8 and he assured the French of divine assistance and victory with both 1 Macc 4 and 2 Macc 11:10–12.⁹⁸ As late as 1357, in his *Tragicum Argumentum de Miserabili Statu Regni Francie*, François de Monte-Belluna would try to arouse the French after their defeat at Poitiers (September 19,

⁹⁵ Jean-Robert Smeets, “Deux fois Judith. L'influence juive dans la Chevalerie de Judas Machabée de Gautier de Belleperche,” *Romania* 111 (1990): 399–427.

⁹⁶ *Le pontifical romain au moyen âge*, vol. 3, *Le pontifical de Guillaume Durand*, ed. Michel Andrieu, vol. 88, *Studi e testi* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca apostolica, 1940), 448–9, see Jean Flori, “Chevalerie et liturgie. Remise des armes et vocabulaire ‘chevaleresque’ dans les sources liturgiques du IX^e au XIV^e siècle,” *Le Moyen Âge* 84 (1978): 247–78 and 409–42, here: 438 and 409–14.

⁹⁷ Jean Leclercq, “Un sermon prononcé pendant la guerre de Flandre sous Philippe le Bel,” *Revue du moyen âge latin* 1 (1945): 165–72, here 168.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 170–71.

1356) through 1 Macc 3:59: “for it is better for us to die in battle than to look upon the evils that have come upon our nation and the Holy Place.”⁹⁹ Finally, at the raising of the royal battle-standard known as the oriflamme, Philippe de Villette (d. 1418) tried to bring French king Charles VI (d. 1422) to his senses through a commentary on 2 Macc 15:21: “Maccabeus, surveying the hordes in front of him, with their varied weapons and fierce elephants, held up his hands to heaven and called upon the Lord, the worker of wonders, for he knew that victory is not decided at by weapons but won by the Lord for such as He judgeth to deserve it.”¹⁰⁰

Considered apart from the question of whether the Maccabees stood in the service of Christianity or the fatherland, the thesis of the Oxford historian Jean Dunbabin that, since the twelfth century these Old Testament heroes lost importance as a moral example, is not sustainable. To the contrary: the imagistic world of the “new heroes” helped them achieve unprecedentedly broad impact.¹⁰¹ They even preserved their traditional place in the “mirrors for princes” with Philippe de Mézières (d. 1405), who, in the *Dream of the Old Pilgrim* (1389), admonished his royal addressee Charles VI as follows: “In the Bible you will find exalted valor and true bravery and evidence of bravery. For the king, knights, and the people, the true mirror of good rule is present in the books of Judges, Kings, and Maccabees.” However, according to the royal adviser, “you find the opposite there as well.”¹⁰²

⁹⁹ André Vernet, “Le ‘Tragicum argumentum de miserabili statu regni Francie’ de François de Monte-Belluna (1357),” *Annuaire-Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire de France* (1962/1963): 102–63, text: 131–63, here 136, § 4; see also § 6, 140.

¹⁰⁰ Charles J. Liebman, Jr., “Un sermon de Philippe de Villette, abbé de Saint-Denis pour la levée de l’oriflamme (1414),” *Romania* 68 (1944/45): 444–70.

¹⁰¹ See inter alia Robert L. Wyss, “Die neun Helden. Eine ikonographische Studie,” *Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 17 (1957): 73–106; Horst Schroeder, *Der Topos der Nine Worthies in Literatur und bildender Kunst* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971); Wim van Anrooij, *Helden van weleer. De Negen Besten in de Nederlanden (1300–1700)* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1997).

¹⁰² Philippe de Mezières, Chancellor of Cyprus, *Le songe du vieil pelerin*, ed. G.W. Coopland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 2: 220–22. That “fruitful stories” could be taken “from Genesis, the Book of Kings, the Maccabees, Judith, Ezra, Esther, the Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles,” was a view still maintained by Enea Silvio Piccolomini (d. 1464), the later Pope Pius II., in his prince’s mirror for the young king of Bohemia and Hungary: “Bischof Eneas an König Ladislaus, Über die Erziehung der Kinder [1450],” in *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini*, ed. Rudolf Wolk, vol. 67, *Fontes Rerum Austriacarum. Diplomata et Acta* (Vienna: Hölder, 1912), 103–58, here 142.

For the start of the fifteenth century, the inventory of the royal library in the Louvre lists three French translations of the Maccabean books. All three were located in composite manuscripts: the first contains, alongside the Books of the Maccabees, a translation of Proverbs;¹⁰³ the second the *Roman du Roi Philippe le Conquérant* (i.e. Philip Augustus) and other “stories” written in French; the third bears the title *Judas Maccabeus*.¹⁰⁴ The Louvre’s *Judas Maccabeus* is linked with, among other texts, the story of the Passion, the *Vies des Pères* (the French version of the early thirteenth century *Vitaspatrum*) and other devotional literature, suggesting that in this case an allegorical reading was intended.¹⁰⁵

What is evident in the composite manuscripts of the Paris court library is that the “past of Israel,” as Dunbabin metaphorically names the Maccabees, has various “faces.” Whether this past was ever unambiguous, as Dunbabin maintains, remains an open question. The third volume’s placing of the French royal house in one genealogical line with the Maccabees points to the crusading idea, education of the prince, and the specifically French *idéologie royale* being tied together throughout the composite manuscripts.¹⁰⁶ At the time the inventory was taken, all three volumes appeared relatively undecorated, without miniatures, marginal drawings, or silver clasps, indicating that Charles V (1364–1380) lacked the boundless enthusiasm of his predecessors for the Old Testament’s warrior heroes. Still, the royal librarian was irritated by the meager embellishment of the first large-format volume, noting in surprise that it was “*point historié*.” Regardless of his irritation, it is clear that the Maccabean books had reached their greatest popularity in the thirteenth century. In Germany, it would initially be the fourteenth century, anticipating their revived popularity in the period of the nineteenth century’s “wars of liberation.”

¹⁰³ Delisle, *Recherches sur la librairie de Charles V*, no. 75, 16.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 997, 164.

¹⁰⁵ A new translation, dedicated to Francis the First, dates from 1514, Paris, BN, Réserve, Velins-1128, fol. 1^r: “Les cronicques treslouables des vertueux faitz du noble et valeureux prince Judas Machabeus... Fait et compose a l’honneur et gloire du treschretien trespuissant et tresredoute roy Francoys premier de ce nom.”

¹⁰⁶ Delisle, *Recherches sur la librairie de Charles V*, no. 893, 146.

3

In the following pages I will briefly summarize the essays in this volume in chronological order. As an opening, the Egyptologist Jan Assmann (University of Heidelberg/University of Constance), writing from a Religious Studies perspective, argues that the form of “holy war” cultivated by the Maccabees is inexorably bound up with the history of monotheism. Under the rubric “Maccabean syndrome,” Assmann identifies five elements from 1 and 2 Maccabees that, both individually and mutually conjoined, he sees as representing a caesura in Western religious history. These elements include the linkage made in 2 Maccabees of the idea of killing for God with that of martyrdom and a belief in the soul’s immortality, and the idea of war as a fulfillment of Scripture. Assmann shares Elias Bickermann’s thesis that the original battle line was not between Jews and heathens but between Jewish traditionalists and Jewish reformers.

In his article, the ancient historian Kai Trampedach (University of Heidelberg) focuses on the *res gestae*, the war of the Maccabees, which he divides into three phases: a phase of annihilation, a phase of expulsion, and a phase of forced circumcision as a means of incorporation. The goal of this process, Trampedach argues, was the creation of an ethnically homogenous space, the Hasmoneans here tying Judaism to a Hellenistic ideal of rule. In turn, Johannes Hahn (University of Münster) explores the problems that can result from the concurrent presence of various religions, using the example of late antique Antioch and with a focus not on Hellenizing Jews but on judaizing Greeks and Christians. Basing his own approach mainly on pictorial material, Albrecht Berger (University of Munich) poses the question of why in a later phase of their reception history the Maccabees no longer played a central role as martyrs in the Eastern Orthodox Church, despite the fact that one of the earliest sites for their veneration was in Constantinople. Berger points to competition between purely Christian cults such as the Seven Sleepers and Saint Felicitas as an important reason for this development. In his overview of Jewish reception history, Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski (Church Divinity School of the Pacific) shows that the mother of the Maccabees and her seven sons here play a central role as well.

The different medieval appropriations and reinterpretations of the Old Testament Maccabee books comprise this book’s second major

thematic complex. We here find a revision of traditional historical schemas, with the history of the Maccabees' reception losing the clear-cut quality it was endowed with by Bickerman, Kantorowicz, and others when it came to questions such as the Maccabees' place in the polemics of the investiture controversy or in the historiography of the Crusades. In this respect, Elizabeth Lapina (Queen's University) uses the example of the Battle of Antioch in 1098 to address the role of the Maccabees in the historiography of the First Crusade. She here argues that other than the propagandists, the historiographers initially relativized the relation between the Maccabees and the crusaders. Some expressed the view that the crusaders were superior to the Maccabees while others elevated the Old Testament warriors for faith to enemies of the crusade or denounced them as Jews. Another situation involving the use of the Maccabean books is described by Oliver Münsch (University of Freiburg) in his discussion of the *libelli de lite* of the investiture controversy. His conclusion is that only followers of the pope – which is to say the side that needed to legitimize itself as the aggressor – made use of the Maccabees as exemplary faith-warriors. On the emperor's side, that of the “victims,” the Maccabees hardly entered into the polemics. Pavlina Rychterova and Pavel Soukup (University of Vienna/University of Prague) reach a similar conclusion regarding the Maccabean reception at the beginning of the Hussite movement. Within the conceptual architecture of a Jan Hus, the two authors indicate, these biblical warriors constituted no argument, only receiving their place later, when Hussitism generated its own cult of martyrdom. In his late writing (*Contra Octo Doctores*), Hus continued to vehemently oppose recourse to the Maccabees.

In her contribution, the German historian Henrike Lähnemann (University of Newcastle) examines the models of fighting of the German Order in vernacular Biblical poetry. As the Mergentheim codex of biblical poetry reveals, the Old Testament descriptions of battle played a prominent role in the Order's reading. When it comes to both Judith and the Maccabees, Lähnemann suggests, the Order's members were mainly interested in the *res gestae* described in *1 and 2 Maccabees*, not in the commentaries. David Collins (Georgetown University) concludes the medieval section with a discussion of the renaissance of the Maccabees in the circle of Cologne humanists around Elias Mertz at the start of the sixteenth century. Aside from Mertz, who preferred a Christological reading, the humanists (in particular Erasmus) were interested primarily in the stoic *constancia* of the Maccabean martyrs

venerated in the eponymous convent. Here the “scientific-philological” interest in the Maccabean texts characteristic of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries would surface for the first time.¹⁰⁷

Patriotic appropriation of the Maccabean material is certainly no invention of the modern world, as Gottfried Hagen’s *Buch von der Stadt Köln* (thirteenth century) makes clear.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, we encounter this process with increasing frequency the closer we come to the modern period – the focus of the book’s third section, opened by Andreas Pečar (University of Rostock). Grappling with the theme of “holy war” was also a central element of the English Civil War. But its participants did not wish to confront the Maccabees because, as Pečar explains, the books were no longer part of the biblical canon. The two final essays are concerned with the forms of patriotic appropriation that developed during the late eighteenth century. Daniel Weidner (University of Berlin) illuminates the context of the composition of Händel’s Maccabee oratorio in 1747, together with its nineteenth and twentieth century effects in both England and Germany. The play “Die Mutter der Makkabäer” by the originally Protestant convert to Catholicism, Zacharias Werner (d. 1823), discussed by Vsevolod Stoukalov-Pogodin (University of Constance) has love for the fatherland, belief, and the readiness for sacrifice as its main themes. But according to Stoukalov-Pogodin, the author’s plan to offer a critique of the Napoleonic wars of liberation missed the mark: the wars were, in fact, over with when the play appeared. Although the play met with no interest,¹⁰⁹ it was nonetheless symptomatic of the nationalistic reading of the Maccabean books that would become established in the nineteenth century, for Jewish nationalists as well as others.¹¹⁰

From a bird’s eye view, we can divide the history of the influence of the Maccabean books into four sequences. Initially, the concern was

¹⁰⁷ Mireille Hadas-Lebel, “La lecture de Flavius Josèphe aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècle,” in *La république des lettres et l’histoire du judaïsme antique XVI^e et XVIII^e*, ed. Chantal Grell and François Laplanche (Paris: Presses de l’Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1992), 101–113.

¹⁰⁸ Gabriela Signori, “Patriotische Heilige? Begriffe, Probleme, Traditionen,” in *Patriotische Heilige*, ed. Dieter Bauer, Klaus Herbers, and Gabriela Signori (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007), 13–32.

¹⁰⁹ Something similar seems to have taken place with the *Makkabäer* of Otto Ludwig (Leipzig: Weber 1854). It was translated later by Léon and published by Aubier in Paris in 1945.

¹¹⁰ Steven Bowman, “Yosippon and Jewish Nationalism,” *American Academy for Jewish Research* 61 (1995): 23–51.

almost exclusively with veneration of the martyrs. Then, beginning in the tenth century, the Maccabees emerged in historiography as religious warriors, celebrated principally as an example, not as narrative material, although they provided the invisible matrix of texts such as Widukind's *Sachsengeschichte*.¹¹¹ But this did not lead to the martyrs being forgotten, as Erasmus's efforts to have the *Passio* printed show. The martyrs would only vanish from Christian memory with the liturgical reform of Pope Pius VI in 1969.¹¹² And the Maccabees also remained a presence over the centuries as champions of faith whose zeal was aimed at religious apostates – a reception that was, however, more strongly inwardly oriented, mainly aimed, in the Reform context, at the movement's opponents.¹¹³ Thirdly, in the Early Modern period, the discussion of the status of the Maccabean books in the biblical canon gradually took on importance; scholarly realms other than theology gradually took up the material, increasingly in the historiographical form with which Josephus had endowed it. It would appear that in this respect the gaps in research remain large.¹¹⁴ Finally, the place of the Maccabees in the nineteenth and early twentieth century Catholic catechism also merits closer scrutiny. In any event, it seems that in the modern context, the material's patriotic or nationalist appropriation was paramount. This was certainly the case within Zionism,¹¹⁵ where the Maccabees emerged as the metaphor of a new, combative form of Judaism, a form that would not hesitate, in the context of other growing forms of nationalism, to flex its muscles.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Peter von Moos, *Geschichte als Topik. Das rhetorische Exemplum von der Antike zur Neuzeit und die historiae im „Polycraticus“* Johanns von Salisbury, vol. 2, Ordo (Hildesheim et al.: Verlag Olms, 1988).

¹¹² *Der römische Kalender gemäß Beschluß des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils erneuert und von Papst Paul VI. eingeführt*, ed. Liturgische Institute in Salzburg, Trier und Zürich (Trier: Paulinus-Verlag, 1969), 19.

¹¹³ Louis Israel, *Newman, Jewish Influence on Christian Reform Movements*, vol. 23, Columbia University Oriental Studies (New York: Columbia University Press, 1925).

¹¹⁴ For example, Peter Burschel, *Sterben und Unsterblichkeit. Zur Kultur des Martyriums in der frühen Neuzeit*, vol. 35, Ancien Régime, Aufklärung und Revolution München (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2004), does not discuss the Maccabees. The reasons for this seem unclear.

¹¹⁵ Julius H. Schoeps, "Moderne Erben der Makkabäer. Die Anfänge der Wiener ‚Kadimah‘, 1882–1897," in *Theodor Herzl und das Wien des Fin de siècle*, ed. Norbert Leser, vol. 5, Schriftenreihe des Ludwig-Boltzmann-Instituts für österreichische Geistesgeschichte (Vienna et al.: Böhlau, 1987), 113–37.

¹¹⁶ *Emanzipation durch Muskelkraft. Juden und Sport in Europa*, ed. Michael Brenner and Gideon Reuveni (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006); Samuel Todd Presner, *Muscular Judaism. The Jewish Body and the Politics of Regeneration* (New York et al.: Routledge, 2007).

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ANTIQUITY

MARTYRDOM, VIOLENCE, AND IMMORTALITY: THE ORIGINS OF A RELIGIOUS COMPLEX

Jan Assmann

From a religio-historical perspective, the Maccabean Revolt of 165 B.C.E., as depicted in the first two Books of the Maccabees and in the writings of the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, should be counted among the truly epochal events in world history. The particular dynamics of this event reveal the workings of a number of interrelated religious phenomena that had never before arisen, let alone simultaneously. They are as follows:

1. The phenomenon of zealotry, that is to say, the act of killing for God.
2. The phenomenon of martyrdom, the inverse of zealotry, namely, the act of dying for God (Hebrew *kiddush ha-shem*).
3. The belief in the immortality of the soul and deliverance from suffering and death in a heavenly paradise.
4. The first purely religiously motivated war, which is to say the first religious war in which human beings were killed in the name of the true God and His laws.
5. A religious war carried out according to the principle of fulfilling Scripture, that is, on the basis and following the precepts of a holy text (i.e. Deuteronomy). "God's law" was realized through historical action.

My argument in these pages will be that the above five phenomena are inextricably linked; each one presumes the other. This "interconnectedness" of religious actions and beliefs in the Maccabean Revolt constituted a unique historical phenomenon, the influence of which has reverberated down through the centuries to the present day. The parallels between the Maccabees and present-day militant Islamicists are readily apparent. Present day society, however, is more sensitive to such issues as zealotry and religious violence than were earlier periods, which had read the accounts of the Maccabees' heroic struggle against Seleucid oppression with undivided sympathy. This is all the

less surprising in that the accounts we have of the relevant events are all friendly to the Maccabees.

The fact that the above cited phenomena – killing for God, martyrdom, the hope for immortality, religious war, and carrying out divine laws in history – first appear in the context of the Maccabean wars, endows them with a high degree of interest. We must, of course, distinguish these wars as historical events from the literary accounts that describe them. The four Maccabean books were written long after the events themselves; the first towards the end of the second century B.C.E., hence two generations later at the earliest, and the others between the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E.

The texts comprise anything but objective historiography. The first two books narrate the same events from different angles. The first book is a Greek translation from an original Hebrew account; it sees itself as the continuation of a traditional Jewish historiography intent on using the events to represent divine rule. The second book, transmitted in the original Greek, is a summary of a five-volume work by the Jewish historian Jason of Cyrene; it is an example of a typically Hellenistic “pathetic” historiography.¹ 3 Maccabees is a historical narrative such as Esther or Daniel, with strong homiletic tendencies (and no mention of the Maccabees), and 4 Maccabees is a pious diatribe over martyrdom in view of reason and its rule over the instincts.

In addition we have the above-mentioned reports about the Maccabean Revolt in Josephus’ two historical works, written towards the end of the first century C.E. In any event, I am not concerned here with the historical events themselves, but with their significance in religious history as an epoch-making shift: the emergence of a new form of religiosity. I am interested in the later literary depiction of these events and how they have left their stamp on history. In this light, it seems striking that in their internal mutual connection, these five phenomena later play no role in either Christian or Jewish transmission. For example, the Maccabees were evoked either as martyrs or as warriors for faith, but never as both at once. The conjunction of martyrdom and zealotry is thus not in and of itself a fact to be gleaned from the history of reception and influence but rather a complex structure, whose

¹ Martin Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus: Studien ihrer Begegnung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Situation Palästinas bis zur Mitte des 2.Jh. v. Chr.* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1988), 176ff.

entirety one sees, moving through the extant documentary sources, for the first time in the Maccabean wars and which may therefore be called the “Maccabean complex.”

1

I would like to first review the five phenomena both on their own and together. Among these phenomena, that of pious zealotry, killing for God or religious violence, will take up by far the greatest space, since I consider it the most important precisely because of its topicality. It was this intense desire to fight for religious freedom that sparked military conflict in the first place.

In this respect we need to note an important distinction. The Maccabean Revolt was a two-front war, directed outwardly and inwardly. It was at once a Jewish resistance movement against Seleucid persecution and a Jewish civil war between a modernizing reformist faction and an orthodox faction of those faithful to religious law.² Above all, it is the latter, inward, aspect of the conflict that reveals the stamp of pious zealotry; it will therefore be the main focus here. I will not discuss the details of this civil war, but analyze the inner conflict in relation to the general situation in Jerusalem in the early second century B.C.E, which I will sketch shortly. In the process, I will disregard external political entanglements with Seleucids, Ptolemies, and Romans. I am concerned with this general historical situation only to the extent that it forms the context for what I have referred to as the “Maccabean complex”. I hope that my brief sketch will help bring the decisive contours of the revolt into focus.

It appears that Jerusalem had an upper social stratum inclined toward reform and toward opening the Jewish religion to Hellenistic culture. According to Peter Schäfer, confronting this reform were “conservative strata faithful to the Torah”; these were “preponderantly from the poorer urban and especially rural population,”³ a situation that sociologically draws parallels with many present-day Islamic countries, for

² Alongside Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus*, see Erich Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Jonathan Kirsch, *God against the Gods: The History of the War Between Monotheism and Polytheism* (New York: Viking Compass, 2004), 78–82.

³ Peter Schäfer, *Geschichte der Juden in der Antike: Die Juden Palästinas von Alexander dem Großen bis zur arabischen Eroberung* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches

instance Iran. But as Erich Gruen has indicated, the conflict's traditional interpretation as a confrontation between Hellenizers and Judaizers is not supported by the texts, which never juxtapose Hellenism and Judaism as alternative options. The opponents of those adhering to the law were in fact not Hellenizers but antinomists, opponents of the law.⁴ Hellenistic culture as a widely held way of life, *ho koinos bios* as Josephus put it, was perceived not as Greek in particular but as Pagan in general. It received a varying degree of acceptance throughout the ancient Mediterranean: while some aspired to it (e.g. participated in the building and use of gymnasia, baths, and civic structures), some partly fought against it (i.e. strived to maintain traditional markers of native cultures). For Gruen, this is the only explanation for the later Hasmoneans giving themselves Greek names, clothing themselves in Greek style, and taking on the Greek way of life. The actual point of dispute was not so much assimilation into Greek customs but deviation from Jewish law. It was possible to be Greek in both outward appearance and intellectual formation and adhere to the law, following the principle of *Torah im Derech Eretz* ("Torah with the way of life of the [host] country"), as recommended by Samson Raphael Hirsch in the nineteenth century. Hence not especially being Greek, but leaving Jewish law behind in favor of modern inter-national culture, was the actual core of the conflict.

This conflict extended back some time before the outbreak of violence and was intensified through an alliance of the reformist faction with the Seleucid government against the conservative faction. We thus read in 1 Macc 1:11–15 that

In those days there came forth out of Israel lawless men, and persuaded many, saying: Let us go and make a covenant with the nations that are round about us; for since we separated ourselves from them many evils have come upon us. And the saying appeared good in their eyes; and as certain of the people were eager (to carry this out), they went to the king, and he gave them authority to introduce the customs of the Gentiles. And they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem according to the manner of the Gentiles. They also submitted themselves to uncircumcision, and repudiated the holy covenant; yea, they joined themselves to the Gentiles, and sold themselves to do evil.

Bibelwerk, 1983), 53. See also Heinz Kreissig, "Die Ursachen des 'Makkabäer'-Aufstandes," *Klio* 58 (1976): 249–253.

⁴ See Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 1–41.

It seems, then, that the initiative for Jerusalem's Hellenization stemmed from the Jewish reform faction, not from the Seleucid authorities. Jason thus had to obtain permission from Antiochus IV to build the gymnasium and take up the Hellenistic way of living; this step signified a turn from royally sanctioned, hence legally binding, Jewish law. Cultural, that is to say, legal and religious homogenization did not generally play any established role in the imperial policies of ancient powers. To the contrary, already the Persians and later the Romans placed great value on ruling subjected peoples according to their own local laws, with their customs often first needing to be legally codified for this to be possible.⁵ What mattered was guaranteeing peace and order in the dependent territories, something best obtained, it was believed, through enacting native laws instead of imposing foreign ones. For a long time the Seleucids were no exception to this rule.

Violent measures were first taken by Antiochus III's notorious successor, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, in 170 B.C.E. in the context of the war being fought between the Seleucid monarch and Ptolemy VI (i.e. the sixth Syrian war). At the end of this conflict, Jerusalem was captured and plundered. The city suffered even worse when following his second Egyptian campaign, Antiochus was reprimanded by the Romans and sent home. He now erected an *Akra*, a citadel with a non-Jewish garrison, and transformed Jerusalem into a military colony with a mixed population. A short time later, we read, Antiochus issued an "edict on religion", the authenticity of which remains a subject of dispute.⁶ If the ancient sources are to be believed, the edict brought the

⁵ Hans G. Kippenberg has defined this procedure as a general principle of imperialistic policy: "When colonizers wish to make an imperium out of the territories they have conquered, then they have to make themselves into protectors or even into inventors of the traditions of the subjugated ethnic groups." See Hans G. Kippenberg, "Die jüdischen Überlieferungen als patrioi nomoi," in *Die Restauration der Götter: Antike Religion und Neo-Paganismus*, ed. Richard Faber and Renate Schlesier (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1986), 45–60, here 51, with reference to *Traditionale Gesellschaften und europäischer Kolonialismus*, ed. Jan-Heren Grevemeyer (Frankfurt a. M.: Syndikat, 1981), 16–46; Gérard Leclerc, *Anthropologie und Kolonialismus* (Munich: Hanser, 1973). See also Peter Frei and Klaus Koch, *Reichsidee und Reichsorganisation im Perserreich*, vol. 55, *Orbis biblicus et orientalis* (Fribourg: Universitätsverlag, 1984); Reinhard Gregor Kratz, *Translatio imperii: Untersuchungen zu den aramäischen Daniel-Erzählungen und ihrem theologie-geschichtlichen Umfeld*, vol. 63, *Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991), 161ff., 225ff.

⁶ See above, n. 5.

conflict to a head by simply forbidding practice of Judaism on pain of death. Thus we read the following in 1 Maccabees (1:41–53):

And the king wrote unto his whole kingdom, that all should be one people, and that every one should give up his [religious] usages. And all the nations acquiesced in accordance with the command of the king. And many in Israel took delight in his (form of) worship, and they began sacrificing to idols, and profaned the Sabbath. Furthermore, the king sent letters by the hand of messengers to Jerusalem and to the cities of Judah [to the effect that] they should practice custom foreign to [the traditions of] the land, and that they should cease the [sacrificing of] whole burnt offerings, and sacrifices, and drink offerings in the sanctuary, and that they should profane the Sabbaths and feasts, and pollute the sanctuary and those who had been sanctified; that they should [moreover] build high places, and sacred groves, and shrines for idols, and that they should sacrifice swine and [other] unclean animals; and that they should leave their sons uncircumcised, and make themselves abominable by means of [practicing] everything that was unclean and profane, so that they might forget the Law, and change all the [traditional] ordinances. And whosoever should not act according to the word of the king, should die.... And many of the people joined themselves unto them, all those [namely] who had forsaken the Law; these did evil in the land, and caused Israel to hide in all manner of hiding-places.

It seems that we could here add nation-building, in the sense of forced integration or ethnic homogenization, to our list of phenomena appearing for the first time in this context. For where previously do we read of a ruler deciding to make a single people out of a state with many peoples? But this episode may well emerge from the realm of legend: the break with the imperialistic policy of ruling subject people according to their own laws seems simply too blatant; we find such persecutions in no other Seleucid realm. For these reasons the authenticity not only of the “nation-building” phenomenon but of the identification of those generally responsible for the persecution has been called into doubt. Steven Weitzman, for instance, has offered new – and to my mind illuminating – arguments disputing the edict’s historicity,⁷ arguments pointing to its status as an invention of the Hasmoneans meant to justify their brutality towards the assimilated Jewish populace. If Weitzman is correct, the phenomenon of martyrdom as a historical

⁷ Steven Weitzman, “Plotting Antiochus’s Persecution,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123, no. 2 (2004): 219–234. I thank Gadi Algazi for drawing my attention to this article.

rather than a literary occurrence can be called into question: after all, martyrdom presupposes persecution. It is the case that in their present form the accounts of the martyrdom of Eleazar and of Hannah or Salomone (2 Macc 6 and 7) are purely literary; but this of course does not mean they are not based on historical experiences here rendered into a more complex literary form. In any case, what is decisive for understanding the conditions in which the ideas of both martyrdom and religiously motivated violence could emerge is the presence of persecution and this was certainly present, even if the impetus for it did not stem from the state but from the Jewish reform faction collaborating with it.⁸

The special problem informing the history of Judea in this period is precisely that Jewish religious laws were disputed among the Jews themselves. However we judge the edict's historicity, a conflict had doubtless emerged, as suggested, between a reform faction that wished for an opening of Judaism to the *koinos bios* and a conservative faction that wanted to maintain the traditional laws at all costs.

The extant Jewish sources represent the conservative viewpoint, presenting the reformist faction as composed only of law-breakers (*anomoi*), deserters (*phygades*), and sinners (*hamartoloi*), all of whom were solely intent on living luxuriously and enriching themselves unhampered. In contrast, the alternate interpretation advocated above all by Elias Bickermann and Martin Hengel,⁹ sees the reformist faction as representing an authentically Jewish-monotheistic movement that hoped for a redefinition of Judaism, one that would place less restrictions on the affiliation of God's chosen people with foreign cultures. While the question of the nature of the reform faction would appear

⁸ Already Elias Bickermann, *Der Gott der Makkabäer: Untersuchungen über Sinn und Ursprung der makkabäischen Erhebung* (Berlin: Schocken, 1937), saw the reformist faction as constituting the impetus to the persecutions: "Since the persecution was locally limited, it seems likely that it was initiated by the local authorities." Bickermann considered Antiochus IV's edict on religion as historically authentic; he interpreted it as issued through prompting of the Hellenists. Victor Tcherikover (*Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* [Philadelphia-Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1961], 159ff., 404ff.) then argued against Bickermann that the edict reflected a reaction to a revolt of the orthodox against the reformers. But this interpretation itself sees the reformers as offering the first initiative; it simply assigns more initiative to the king. Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus*, 464–564 (chap. 4) then furnished more arguments for Bickermann's interpretation.

⁹ Hengel may well remain the pre-eminent specialist in both the conflict-laden relations between Hellenism and Judaism and zealotry.

open-ended, it seems to me that the arguments of Bickermann and Hengel are well worth considering.

Jewish monotheism can be viewed as constituting two opposing discourses, namely, universalism and exclusivism. On the one hand, late biblical or early Jewish monotheism proclaims the uniqueness of God as lord of the world, of history, and of all peoples;¹⁰ on the other, however, it lays stress on the difference between the chosen people and other peoples (Hebrew *goyim*, heathens) and defines affiliation with this people in terms of strict adherence to the Jewish way of life grounded in Mosaic law. For its part, the Jewish reformist faction favored the universalistic perspective, recognizing in the Jewish God the same deity broadly designated in the Hellenistic world as *Hypsistos*, "highest being."¹¹ This faction perceived exclusivism as baneful believing that Jewish People had been fairing poorly ever since they separated themselves from the Gentiles.¹²

According to Hengel, the reformers' guiding principle was in fact not "Away from Judaism!" but rather "Back to Abraham!"¹³ meaning away from Moses, in the sense of strict, "puritanical," Deuteronomical observance of the law. They wanted to go back to a form of Jewish life *ante legem*: a life that, in relation to both the mores and ideas of God, was grounded in a profound belief in engagement with its surrounding socio-cultural environment.¹⁴ Later, that would also be

¹⁰ Cf. e.g. Isaiah 44:24–45:8.

¹¹ See Aristeas' information as conveyed by Josephus, Ant. 12.2 (II p. 62): "Through intensive research I have found that the same God who gave the Jews their laws also rules your realm. We ourselves honor this God, creator of the universe, and name him 'the living one' because he endows all of us with life."

¹² 1 Macc 1:11. We can presume that God's remarkable statement in Ezekiel 20:25, "Moreover I gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances by which they could not live," also plays a role here. According to Ezekiel 20:26, this refers to the law of sacrifice of the first-born. But it could also refer to laws of demarcation, especially dietary laws. See also Rainer Kessler, "'Gesetze, die nicht gut waren:' Eine Polemik gegen das Deuteronomium," in *Schriftprophetie: Festschrift für Jörg Jeremias*, ed. Friedhelm Hartenstein et al. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2004), 253–263.

¹³ Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus*, 552ff.

¹⁴ On the puritanism of the law, see following passage from Aristeas' letter: The legislators, equipped by God for comprehensive knowledge, surrounded us with impenetrable palisades and iron walls, so that we came into no contact with other peoples in any respect, and were pure in body and soul, free from deceptive ideas, and honored God who is alone God and powerful, in contrast to creation... So that we did not soil ourselves with anything nor pollute ourselves through contact with what is bad, he surrounded us on all sides with purity regulations, commands regarding food and drink and hearing and seeing. (*Letter of Aristeas*, 139 and 142, cited in Gerhard

a guiding principle for Paul, who emphasizes the lord's conversation with Abraham in the fifteenth chapter of *Genesis* over the one later on in the seventeenth chapter, which contains mention of circumcision as the sign of the covenant.¹⁵ In the context of post-exilic Judaism, there is much to commend understanding Abraham and Moses as not only standing for two epochs in Jewish history but also for two alternative interpretations of Judaism, the one centering on origins, the other on law.¹⁶ This understanding corresponds to the thesis that the Abrahamic narratives must belong to a rather recent layer of the biblical texts, since Abraham is very rarely mentioned outside the *Book of Genesis*.¹⁷

Along with the question of ethnic identity, a question of theology needs to be addressed here. One of the key scenes in the stories of Abraham involves his encounter with Melchizedek, the Canaanite king of Salem (= Jerusalem) and priest of the highest god, whom Abraham blesses in the name of this highest god (*El Elyon* = *Hypsistos*), creator of heaven and earth. This is the same god honored by the Phoenician cities in the Maccabean period as *Ba'al-Schamem* ("lord of heaven");¹⁸ an all-encompassing heavenly deity whose cult the reformist party wished to introduce to Jerusalem under the name *Zeus Olympios*. They apparently recognized this deity as their own god, following the example of Abraham. In their eyes, the dedication of the temple to *Zeus Olympios* signified not the rededication of the Temple to a foreign god, but the recognition of an additional appellation for Yahweh (*Adonai* not having been an actual name, but a periphrasis for the tetragrammaton).¹⁹ The Jewish God was understood by the Greeks in just this way. Hekataios of Abdera, as recorded in Diodorus Siculus, reported that for the Jews, "heaven alone, embracing the earth," was

Delling, *Die Bewältigung der Diasporasituation durch das hellenistische Judentum* (Göttingen et al.: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 9.

¹⁵ Jacob Taubes, *Die politische Theologie des Paulus: Vorträge, gehalten an der Forschungsstätte der evangelischen Studiengemeinschaft in Heidelberg, 23.–27. Februar 1987*, ed. Aleida Assmann (Munich: Fink, 1993), 69f.

¹⁶ Thomas Römer, "Recherches actuelles sur le cycle d'Abraham," in *Studies in the Book of Genesis: Literature, Redaction and History*, ed. André Wénin, vol. 155, *Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum Lovaniensium* (Louvain: University Press, 2001), 179–211.

¹⁷ Hermann Spieckermann, "'Ein Vater vieler Völker:' Die Verheißungen an Abraham im Alten Testament," in *"Abraham unser Vater:" Die gemeinsamen Wurzeln von Judentum, Christentum und Islam*, ed. Reinhard G. Kratz and Tilman Nagel (Göttingen: Wallstein-Verlag, 2003), 8–21.

¹⁸ Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus*, 542f.

¹⁹ Bickermann, *Der Gott der Makkabäer*, 92–96.

“god and lord of the whole”;²⁰ likewise, according to Poseidonios, as recorded in Strabo, the Jews taught that “that one being is God, which comprises us all and land and sea, which we name heaven and earth and the nature of things.”²¹

Just as Jewish monotheism hovered between exclusivism and universalism, Jewish identity hovered between political, religious, and ethnic definitions. This is, as far as I am aware, a rather unique case in human history. Traditionally, ethnic identity has been by and large a question of origin (of, as Herodotus puts it, *to homaimon*, “the same blood”);²² *political* identity is a question of association and dissociation, of integration and exclusion, of group formation and outward demarcation; and *religious* identity is a question of cult and custom – Herodotus thus speaks of “the same rites (*thusiai*) and customs (*ēthē*)”. The special quality of the situation in ancient Judaism was, as indicated, the fusion of these three criteria of identity. The symbolic figure of Abraham represents the fusion of religious and *ethnic* identity, that of Moses, the fusion of religious and *political* identity. Through the latter sort of fusion, religion itself became for the first time a question of social association and dissociation; this new type of religion then became the model, over time, for the new world religions such as Christianity and Islam. Its defining feature was its political nature, which involved a founding and defining of group affiliation and a demarcation of outer borders as a way of distinguishing between “insiders” and “outsiders”, believers and non-believers, Israel and the nations, Christians and Pagans, *dar al Islam* and *dar al harb*.

²⁰ Hekataios in Diodorus Siculus, 40.3, cited in Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus*, 466.

²¹ Strabo 16. 2.35–37, cited in Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus*, 470.

²² Herodotus VIII 144: “And then there is Hellenism (*tò hellenikón*), the equality of blood and language (*homaimón te kai omóglosson*), the shared holy places and rites and identical mores (*etheá te homótropa*).” See Moses I. Finley, “The Ancient Greeks and their Nation,” in idem, *The Use and Abuse of History* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1975), 120–133. In the present context, it is important to note that once Jewish political independence belonged to the past it of course became possible to enter, precisely, the *ethnos* through conversion; hence according to Talmudic law one is fully a member of the *ethnos* (not only of the religion), with no distinctions whatsoever, following conversion. This might perhaps be considered a “positive” outcome to the “negative” identity-forming process being pointed to here: in a very different period than the Maccabean-Hellenistic, the rabbis – practically concerned, to be sure, with communal survival in the Diaspora – refused to reduce Jewish ethnic identity (or, say, the principle of communal solidarity) to a question of origin (or matrilineal descent), or “the same blood”.

The purely political dichotomy of association and disassociation is something different than the sort of friend-foe dichotomy proposed by Carl Schmitt.²³ The individual who does not politically belong to a community need not be an enemy. To the contrary, treaties, alliances, and various forms of cooperation can be entered into with other groups without these groups actually being accepted into the body politic. The borders between territories, nations, or peoples allow for many forms of traffic in both directions. In the ancient world, religion typically protected and regulated this border traffic. Treaties were typically sworn into existence. The oaths being sworn by the different parties often called on their own local gods, who were then often afforded equivalent statuses. One example here is the reference to the weather god of the Hittites and the sun god of the Egyptians in the state treaty between Hattushilis III and Ramses II. The gods become sponsors of the treaty and watch over its strict observance. That a foreign people worship gods other than one's own does not establish grounds for enmity, but rather promotes understanding.²⁴ The principle of association therefore had not been defined by cult but rather by political rule and descent.

However, it was precisely this principle that underwent a change in the context of the new religious form that emerged in Israel or Judea in the centuries between 750 and 150 B.C.E. and that became historically manifest for the first time in the Maccabean wars. The principle of affiliation with the nation of Israel in the sense of the God's chosen people now no longer centered around rule and descent but around adherence to the law. Being Jewish in the religious sense was defined by such adherence. Those who abandoned the law no longer belonged to it but rather to the *goyim* (Greek *ta ethnē*), the heathens. Religion in this new sense was neither a cult nor a *weltanschauung* and belief system, but above all a form of life. In Palestine of this period, Flavius Josephus explains, two ways of life stood opposed, the Jewish and the "general." For the first time there were Jews no longer recognized as such but disassociated, that is, counted among the heathens. In the context of persecution such disassociation turned into enmity, into a *casus belli*.

²³ Carl Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1932).

²⁴ See Jan Assmann, "Translating Gods: Religion as a factor of cultural (in)translatability," in *Translatability of Cultures: Figurations of the Space Between*, ed. Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 25–36.

The dissociative tendency of this new form of religion was simply the other side of its associative strength. The stronger faith binds, generates solidarity, brings together, the sharper its capacity to draw distinctions and exclude those who are different. We can only speak of heathens, heretics, and apostates in connection with this religious form. This dialectics of inclusion and exclusion was unknown to the old religions; it was impossible to abandon or to convert to them. Apostasy and loyal submission were purely political categories standing in relation to rulers, not gods. The new form came into being through a polarization of the relation to God by becoming a principle of association and disassociation, thus entering into competition with the political sphere or else subjugating it completely. In the traditional sort of state, religion, which was cultic in nature, was subordinate to the political sphere – it was a governmental instrument and therefore a governmental sphere of responsibility. To the extent that the new form transcended the cultic sphere and encompassed the legal sphere, it came to determine affiliation with what was defined as “a priestly kingdom and a holy nation” (Ex 19:6). In short, the nation was now a religiously defined and politically organized community, under the rule of law as codified divine will.

To return to the question of the zealotry of the Maccabees: as already emphasized, it is possible that what was here in play was not only a reaction-formation to radical efforts at modernization but beyond that, to violent persecution. In any event, for the first time in history the circumstances had here emerged for a tradition to alter, as it were, its aggregate condition and take on the *status confessionis*. What previously had constituted pious religious practice now became a question of life and death. Interestingly, in this context Martin Hengel speaks of a “zeal against the law” that would itself spark the “zeal for the law” of the authentic Zealot movement as a reaction-formation.²⁵ Although the historical assessment is surely correct here, the terminology perhaps needs some rethinking. One can only be “zealous” (Hebrew *qana*, Greek *zeloun*) for the law, faith, and God. As far as I know, the reformers are never termed *zelotai* or *qana'im*. Being zealous is a sacred activity in that it is modeled after God’s jealousy (*qin'ah*; *El qanna*). This mirror-relation between divine jealousy and human

²⁵ Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus*, 532–545.

zealotry is expressed especially clearly in the story of Phinehas, the model for all zealots. It is found in Num 25:6–9:

Just then one of the Israelites came and brought a Midianite woman into his family, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of the whole congregation of the Israelites, while they were weeping at the entrance of the tent of the meeting. When Phinehas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he got up and left the congregation. Taking a spear in his hand, he went after the Israelite man into the tent, and pierced the two of them, the Israelite and the woman, through the belly. So the plague was stopped among the people of Israel. Nevertheless those that died by the plague were twenty-four thousand.

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: "Phinehas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my wrath from the Israelites by manifesting such zeal among them on my behalf that in my jealousy I did not consume the Israelites."

This scene has the status of a primal scene, a straightforwardly compulsory model for Maccabean zealotry. In 1 Macc 2:26 we thus read how Mattathias is seized by zeal for the lord when he sees a Jew about to carry out the same sacrifice demanded by the king that he, the high priest, has steadfastly refused to offer (1 Macc 2:24–28):

And when Mattathias saw it, his zeal was kindled, and his heart quivered (with wrath); and his indignation burst forth for judgment, so that he ran and slew him on the altar; and at the same time he [also] killed the king's officer who had come to enforce the sacrificing, pulled down the altar, and [thus] showed forth his zeal for the Law, just as Phinehas had done in the case of Zimri the son of Salom. And Mattathias cried out with a loud voice in the city, saying, "Let everyone that is zealous for the Law and that would maintain the covenant come forth after me!" And he and his sons fled unto the mountains, and left all that they possessed in the city.

That is the beginning of the Maccabean revolt and the origin of zealotry.

Those on the opposing side naturally were also zealous, but not in the unambiguously positive sense of the Hebrew concept of *qana'*. The antithesis of "being zealous for" would apparently not be "being zealous against" but "persecute"; the concept of "being zealous against the law" would imply a readiness to die in opposition to the law or for the reforms, apparently an inherent contradiction. But more important than this semantic question is Hengel's interpretation of the Zealot movement as a reaction-formation.

This interpretation can be applied to modern zealotry, which is often referred to as “fundamentalism”. In many Islamic countries such as Iran or Turkey, for example, wearing the veil was nothing more than a pious custom; it only gained the rank of a *status confessionis* by being banned under Kemal Ataturk and Shah Reza Pahlevi in the 1920s. The zealotry of the Iranian mullahs is, among other things, a reaction-formation to Iran’s forced modernization under the Pahlevis. In its elements of modernization, enlightenment, and religious reform, the Jewish reformist faction was concerned with resembled what the modern Islamic states brand as “Westernizing.” The Maccabean measures against that faction have the character of a bloody counter-reformation. It is important to note here that the conflict was internal to Judaism and hence inner-religious. Through the reformers’ ties to state power, the counter-reformers had no choice but to turn themselves to violence. Zeal for God is an inner-religious phenomenon.²⁶ Originally it was directed not against the other monotheisms but against the heathens, heretics, and apostates within Judaism’s own ranks. The anti-Islamic crusades and anti-Jewish massacres of the Mediaeval period would mark the first turn against other religions.

2

To be zealous does not only mean being ready to kill; it also means being ready to die. Murder and martyrdom belong together like two sides of a coin. As indicated above, this is the main reason we should not speak of zealots against the law. None of the people involved would have been willing to die for abandonment of the law. Assimilation has no *status confessionis*.

Martyrdom comes from the Greek noun *martys*, “witness.” Bearing witness in this context has a double meaning. On the one hand, it refers to dying while bearing witness and on the other hand, it refers to things (i.e. death) to which ones bears witness. Martyrs bear witness to the pre-eminent truth and validity of their belief or law by preferring death to renouncing either. Regarding bearing witness to their martyrdom, in the Talmud we find the stipulation that in the case of

²⁶ I note in passing that as his title reveals, Peter Sloterdijk does not recognize the introverted nature of zeal for God in his book *Gottes Eifer: Vom Kampf der drei Monotheismen* (Frankfurt a. M.: Verlag der Weltreligionen, 2007).

forced conversion martyrdom is only to be incurred if at least ten Jews are present to witness the act; otherwise conversion is to be preferred (BT *Shabbat* 130a).²⁷ In addition only three of the 613 commandments and interdictions have the highest *status confessionis* requiring martyrdom: murder, fornication, and idolatry. Those forced to commit any of these things should rather suffer death. Practically, however, the sole matter at issue here is idolatry, understood to include the eating of pork and the abjuration of faith. The Hebrew expression for martyrdom, *kiddush ha-shem*, literally means “the sanctification of the name.” Its opposite is *chillul ha-Shem*, “profanation of the name.” As Verena Lenzen has indicated, the idea of the name’s sanctification forms the central meaning of Judaism as a religion; it also plays a prominent role in the Christian *Lord’s Prayer*. It is clear that for the most part, Christians no longer think of martyrdom in this context; but according to Lenzen, in Judaism as well, the focus is not only on dying but on living: on life as devotion, the question of martyrdom only arising when, in the context of persecution of the pious, a choice is posed between *kiddush ha-shem* and *hillul ha-shem*. In Christianity, just as martyrdom stands under the sign of the cross, it also stands under the sign of *aqedat Yizhak*, the binding of Isaac, for that scene formed the antitype or pre-figuration of Christ’s crucifixion. Abraham and Isaac are the original martyrs, just as Phinehas is the original zealot; but in the ancient Jewish imaginative world, the *aqedah* has an entirely different status than the scene from Num 25.

The Maccabean examples of martyrdom are narrated in 2 Macc 6 and 7 and shaped into a resplendent model of piety in 4 Macc 8–18. The two protagonists are old Eleazar (2 Macc 6:18–31; 4 Macc 6:7) and the mother Hannah and her seven sons (2 Macc 7; 4 Macc 8–18); in the latter instance, the choice is between either eating pork or willingly undergoing death by gruesome torture. The mother proceeds according to the Abrahamic model, pushing her sons towards martyrdom. For their part, the sons proceed according to the model offered by Isaac, joyfully and steadfastly submitting to the torture.²⁸ We here have historiography meant to serve as example, the two scenes being meant

²⁷ See Verena Lenzen, *Jüdisches Leben und Sterben im Namen Gottes: Studien über die Heiligung des göttlichen Namens (Kiddusch HaSchem)* (Munich: Piper, 1995), 102.

²⁸ See Aharon Agus, *The Binding of Isaac and Messiah: Law, Martyrdom, and Deliverance in Early Rabbinic Religiosity*, SUNY Series in Judaica (New York: State University of New York Press, 1988).

in a sense as beacons for Jews in periods of intense persecution. The purely literary nature of these narratives is certain; but it is possible that such cases occurred at the time (and for the first time).

3

Just as dying for God is part and parcel of zealous killing for God, dying for God comprises the idea of personal salvation. This notion is something completely new in the history of biblical religion. The Hebrew Bible knows no immortality of the soul. The realm of the dead into which all must descend is a realm distant from God. The prophet Isaiah says "For Sheol cannot thank you, death cannot praise you; those who go down to the Pit cannot hope for your faithfulness" (Isa 38:18). The same idea appears repeatedly in the Psalms. Even in Sirach (*Ecclesiasticus*), written in close temporal proximity to First and Second Maccabees, we read: "Who will sing praises to the Most High in Hades in place of the living who give thanks? From the dead, as from one who does not exist, thanksgiving has ceased; those who are alive and well sing the Lord's praises" (Sir 17:27–28).

This changed with the Maccabees. The clearest profession of immortality and of reward and punishment in the beyond are located in the scenes of martyrdom in 2 Macc. Each of the seven sons articulates his expectation of immortality, most clearly the second: "Thou dost dispatch us from this life, but the King of the world shall raise us up, who have died for his laws, and revive us to life everlasting." (2 Macc 7:9). The fourth son puts it thus: "Tis meet for those who perish at men's hands to cherish hope divine that they shall be raised up by God again" (7:14), and the youngest thus: "These our brothers, after enduring a brief pain, have now drunk of everflowing life, in terms of God's covenant, but thou shalt receive by God's judgment the just penalty of thine arrogance" (7:36). According to the traditional biblical conception, God's promises are fulfilled within history, as the generations unfold, not in the beyond. But for the martyr, whose self-sacrifice represents the highest imaginable deed, such distant historical fulfillment is not acceptable. In the martyr's case, the deficiency of meaning within this life is experienced as so unsustainable that it sends forth a command for immediate fulfillment. Maintaining a sense of God's justice here means believing in a beyond where the martyrdom will be rewarded. From this time onward, the idea that martyrs immediately enter paradise took on strength within Judaism. At the time of Jesus,

the Pharisees already generally believed in immortality, the Sadducees rejecting the idea as they had before.

The emergence of the ideas of martyrdom and immortality is interwoven with the arrival of apocalypticism,²⁹ understood as both a literary genre and a perspective on the world, which we can define as an absolute and impatient expectation of the end of the present world and the coming of a new world. The earliest apocalyptic text is the Book of Daniel, written circa 165 B.C.E., hence in the middle of the Maccabean crisis, which appears to be referred to repeatedly. We see then, that in the context of persecution, Jewish messianism, the expectation of a salvational king at the end of history, is converted into apocalypticism, the expectation of an imminent end of the world. In light of that imminent end, the apocalypticists warn, prepare yourselves for the world to come. Two paths lead there – the patient path of law and the immediate path of martyrdom, martyrs being directly redeemed into the coming world. This defines the great temptation of martyrdom. Martyrs and zealots are apocalypticists. Suffering from the weight of this world, they place all their hopes on the coming world (Hebrew, *ha-olam ha-ba*). For this reason, since the time of its emergence, apocalypticism has been a typical religious form among oppressed peoples and social strata. Persecution, martyrdom, and apocalypticism (or the expectation of the imminent end) are also closely connected in Christianity. Apocalypticism is a central element of the phenomena that coalesced for the first time during the Maccabean Period and can be seen today as well in acts of Islamistic Fundamentalism. This linkage is eloquently encapsulated in the title of a recent film directed by Hany Abu-Assad, “Paradise Now!”

4

We have arrived now at the fourth and fifth phenomena manifest in the “Maccabean complex”: religious warfare under the sign of scriptural fulfillment.³⁰ This phenomenon was itself historically unprecedented.

²⁹ *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and in the Near East: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism*, ed. David Hellholm (Tübingen: Mohr, 1983).

³⁰ In chapter two of this book, Kai Trampedach very accurately summarizes the elements involved in holy war as follows: 1) the killing of apostates and heathens; 2) the destruction of pagan places of worship, 3) the justification and interpretation of the actions by recourse to holy texts.

Religious wars are waged for the sake of correct belief and its triumph on earth, typically with appeal to a holy text. The end of the Maccabean campaigns was marked by the founding of the first theonomic Jewish state: the theocracy that Josephus praised as a specific Jewish accomplishment.³¹ This is what the Maccabees strived for and what distinguishes their actions from those characterizing an ordinary resistance movement or guerilla war and renders them so similar to those of the modern jihadists. Religious wars are civil wars. They are not aimed primarily at conquest, power, and enrichment, but at the political realization of divine will. Central to this aim, above all, is the idea of purity, a “puritan” element already emerging very markedly with the Maccabees.³² What they were engaged in was a form of religious cleansing, which for them included not only purifying the temple but also the forced circumcision of Jews who had partly assimilated into the *koinos bios*.

Beyond that, it included the annihilation of those Jews who had assimilated fully: if we are to believe the account in 1 Maccabees, Judas Maccabeus eradicated entire Jewish cities that had accepted complete Hellenization. He waged his war – and here we arrive at the last phenomenon in the Maccabean complex, the fulfillment of Scripture – according to a sort of holy screenplay, the laws of war stipulated in the twentieth chapter of Deuteronomy. We there find a distinction between normal warfare and exterminatory warfare. Normal rules of war apply to distant cities and anticipate their subjugation or conquest, with the male population killed and the women and children enslaved in the case of conquest.³³ In contrast, Canaanite cities, that is, those that

³¹ See Hubert Cancik, “Theokratie und Priesterherrschaft: Die mosaische Verfassung bei Flavius Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 2.157–198” in *Theokratie*, ed. Jacob Taubes, vol. 3, Religionstheorie und politische Theologie (Munich-Paderborn: Fink, 1987), 65–77.

³² See article by Kai Trampedach in this volume.

³³ “When you draw near to a town to fight against it, offer it terms of peace. If it accepts your terms of peace and surrenders to you, then all the people in it shall serve you at forced labor. If it does not submit to you peacefully, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it; and when the Lord your God gives it into your hand, you shall put all its males to the sword. You may, however, take as your booty the women, the children, livestock, and everything else in the town, all its spoil. You may enjoy the spoil of your enemies, which the Lord your God has given you. Thus you shall treat all the towns that are very far from you, which are not towns of the nations here.” (Deut 20:10–15).

are heathen, are meant to be anathematized.³⁴ This means that nothing living is to be left alive and no booty is to be taken, but everything is to be burnt. The same ban [*herem*] has to be applied to cities that have abandoned the law and had once again taken up Canaanite mores.³⁵ But the actual target of the biblical polemic is not “alien” heathenry, in other words Egypt or Babylonia, but rather Canaan heathenry in the land of Israel. Present in the stipulations regarding how to act with the Canaanites is the same puritanism that Judas Maccabeus would practice: no alliances are allowed, no marriages, indeed no sparing of life; what is mandated is annihilation of the heathen holy places,³⁶ which represent a trap, a source of temptation, incitement, even contagion: “They shall not live in your land, or they will make you sin against me; for if you worship their gods, it will surely be a snare to you” (Ex 23:31ff. here 32–33.). In plain words, this amounts to the following principle: you shall annihilate heathenry within your own ranks. In this manner, Judas Maccabeus already saw the emerging Torah as the highly compulsory codification of God’s will, to be carried out with all the strength one had. This represents, I would argue, a fundamentalist principle strongly evident in Maccabean ideology.

³⁴ “But as for the towns of these peoples that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, you must not let anything that breathes remain alive. You shall annihilate them – the Hittites and the Ammorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites – just as the Lord your God has commanded, so that they may not teach you to do all the abhorrent things that they do for their gods, and you thus sin against the Lord your God.” (Deut 20:15–18).

³⁵ “If you hear it said about one of the towns that the Lord your God is giving you to live in, that scoundrels from among you have gone out and led the inhabitants of the town astray, saying, ‘Let us go and worship other gods,’ whom you have not known, then you shall inquire and make a thorough investigation. If the charge is established that such an abhorrent thing has been done among you, you shall put the inhabitants of that town to the sword, utterly destroying it and everything in it – even putting its livestock to the sword. All of its spoil you shall gather into its public square; then burn the town and all its spoil with fire, as a whole burnt offering to the Lord your God. It shall remain a perpetual ruin, never to be rebuilt. Do not let anything devoted to destruction stick to your hand, so that the Lord may turn from his fierce anger and show you compassion, and in his compassion multiply you, as he swore to your ancestors, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God by keeping all his commandments that I am commanding you today, doing what is right in the sight of the Lord your God.” (Deut 13:13–19).

³⁶ “You must demolish completely all the places where the nations whom you are about to dispossess served their gods, on the mountain heights, on the hills, and under every leafy tree. Break down their altars, smash their pillars, burn their sacred poles with fire, and hew down the idols of their gods, and thus blot out their name from their places.” (Deut 12:2–3).

The idea of fulfilling scripture not only steered the Maccabees' active zealotry but the passive variety as well, their readiness for martyrdom. This readiness is, to be sure, not expressed in the Maccabean texts themselves, but is confirmed later in a midrash on the lamentations of Jeremiah written in the Talmudic period. Here the sons go to their deaths accompanied by a verse from the Torah (Exodus and Deuteronomy) referring to the first commandment, that of absolute fidelity to God. The youngest son is drawn into a long conversation about religion by the emperor, who wishes to save him; in that context the youth introduces no less than eighteen scriptural passages. We here find a third element joining the spirit of heroic sacrifice and absolute fidelity: a total interiorization of Scripture. We might here speak, with Thomas Mann, of a "citational life," or rather citational death: the sealing of a life led in fulfillment of Scripture with a scriptural citation in the face of death.³⁷

In all of its various motifs and facets, the unique coalescence of religious phenomena on the Maccabean Period is rooted in the idea of an exclusionary monotheism that took on its normative contours in the period of religious and social delimitation in the Hellenistic Era, basing itself on a corpus of holy writing elevated into a canon. Both as historical events and in their literary shaping, the Maccabean wars would have not been conceivable without the idea of the canon as a codification of divine will. They would also not have been possible without the idea of a monotheistic *theology of will* demanding fidelity, obedience, and practical attentiveness extending into all realms of life in return for a salvational promise. But does this mean, inversely, that monotheism is inconceivable without the new Maccabean ideology? Was violence the necessary, unavoidable, and logical consequence of monotheism?

Such a conclusion, it seems to me, should be emphatically rejected. Already the rabbis made considerable efforts to suppress this ideology, which had gained enormous momentum during the Jewish wars in the time of Vespasian and Titus (e.g. the Sicarii) and which later, during the Bar Kochba revolt, had cost countless human lives.³⁸ The

³⁷ *Lamentations Rabbah* 1:16, cited in Aharon Agus, *The Binding of Isaac and the Messiah*, 17–20. Mann uses the expression "zitathaftes Leben" in his essay Thomas Mann, "Freud und die Zukunft," in *idem, Gesammelte Werke*, vol. IX, (Frankfurt a. M.: S. Fischer, 1974), 478–501.

³⁸ Richard A. Horsley, "The Sicarii: Ancient Jewish 'Terrorists'," *The Journal of Religion* 59, no. 4 (1979): 435–458.

Maccabean books were not taken into the canon, the account of Josephus slipped into oblivion, and at times rabbis contemplated imbuing the Festival of Chanukah with another meaning. Maccabean ideology is highly ambivalent. It had its moment during the persecutions under Antiochus IV, Trajan, and Hadrian, and the heroes and martyrs emerging from those conflicts merit the highest admiration; but the ideational complex first manifest in the Maccabean books neither suits our age nor the essence of monotheistic religions. It presumes the monotheistic idea but does not necessarily follow from it.³⁹

In conclusion, I would like to again emphasize that the characteristic linkage of motifs and ideas first emerging historically in connection with the Maccabean wars was not a real category of historical memory. Well into the modern period, the Maccabees, together with what Katell Berthelot chose to term their “ideology,” were in fact no living part of either Christian or Jewish memory.⁴⁰ They were of course always celebrated in the Chanukah festival, but their victory and valor, while acknowledged and pedagogically transmitted as important in preventing a vanishing of Judaism into the Hellenistic world, was given less celebratory weight than the miracle of the oil. With the emergence of secular, Zionist-oriented Jewry, the Maccabees, together with the fall of the Massada fortress, were in a sense re-endowed with an important mnemo-historical role. But where Jews now mainly view the Maccabees as heroes, and Christians view them often as martyrs, sometimes as champions of faith, they have not been connected to the complex of zealotry, martyrdom, salvational hope, and “fundamentalist” adherence to Scripture pointed to in these pages: a complex that continues to make itself manifest in our present age.

³⁹ On the connection between monotheism and violence see Jan Assmann, *Monotheismus und die Sprache der Gewalt: Vortrag im Alten Rathaus am 17. November 2004*, vol. 116, *Wiener Vorlesungen im Rathaus* (Vienna: Picus-Verlag, 2006) and the book’s critical evaluation in Hans G. Kippenberg, *Gewalt als Gottesdienst: Religionskriege im Zeitalter der Globalisierung* (Munich: Beck, 2008). Kippenberg’s summary: “There is a connection between monotheism and violence; but it must be considered a contingent connection: it is neither necessary nor impossible.” (p. 22) This, in any event, corresponds to my own frequently published argument. The crucial point in my view is to once and for all block this contingent connection. See also the collection *Religion, Politik und Gewalt: Kongressband des XII. Europäischen Kongresses für Theologie 18.–22. September 2005 in Berlin*, ed. Friedrich Schweitzer, vol. 29, *Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2006).

⁴⁰ Katell Berthelot, “L’idéologie maccabéenne: Entre idéologie de la résistance armée et idéologie du martyre,” *Revue des Études Juives* 165/1–2 (2006): 99–122.

THE WAR OF THE HASMONEANS

Kai Trampedach

In the autumn of 168 B.C.E., the Seleucid king Antiochus IV issued an edict forbidding his Jewish subjects from practicing their religion.¹ Circumcision and celebration of the Sabbath were forbidden; legal books that fell into the hands of the authorities were destroyed; the central holy site of the Jews, the Temple in Jerusalem, was profaned through pagan cultic practice. Royal emissaries entered the Judean cities under royal jurisdiction and called on the inhabitants to offer pagan sacrifices. When royal officials arrived in Modiin and demanded the stipulated sacrifices, a certain Mattathias declined to follow the king's command and deviate from the laws of his fathers. Another Jewish man stepped in to offer the sacrifice (1 Macc 2:24–26):

And when Mattathias saw it, his zeal was kindled, and his heart quivered (with wrath); and his indignation burst forth for judgment, so that he ran and slew him on the altar; and at the same time he [also] killed the king's officer who had come to enforce the sacrificing, pulled down the altar, and [thus] showed forth his zeal for the Law, just as Phinehas had done in the case of Zimri the son of Salom.

Mattathias' deed had the effect of a signal-light, catalyzing the Maccabean Revolt. The revolt already contains *in nuce* all the elements of a holy war, which is to say a war putatively commanded by God and carried out on behalf of religious goals. Key elements at work here are the killing of apostates and pagans, the destruction of pagan places of worship, and the interpretation and justification of the actions through recourse to Scripture. In the above passage, the author cites lines from Num 25:6–15 where we are told that Phinehas gained God's special favor by unhesitatingly spearing Zimri and his Midianite wife because of their participation in Midianite sacrificial festivals. Just as Phinehas'

¹ See for instance Elias Bickermann, *Der Gott der Maccabäer: Untersuchungen über Sinn und Ursprung der Maccabäischen Erhebung* (Berlin: Schocken, 1937), 120–126; Klaus Bringmann, *Hellenistische Reform und Religionsverfolgung in Judäa: Eine Untersuchung zur jüdisch-hellenistischen Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 97–99; on the dating see *ibid.* 28.

zeal turned the plague away from Israel, Mattathias opened the way to Israel's salvation through an analogous deed.²

Mattathias and his sons fled into the mountains where they were joined by increasing numbers of Jews. By the time of the progenitor's death a year later, his son and successor, Judas Maccabeus, had a significant group of fighters at his disposal. With them he carried out successful "guerilla warfare"; soon he could even risk confronting larger Seleucid armies in open battle.³ Three years after the beginning of the religious persecution, he succeeded in taking back, purifying, and rededicating the Jerusalem Temple. Nonetheless, the war continued and this despite Antiochus V officially canceling his father's persecutory edict in 163 and restoring the Jewish Temple state's political-religious autonomy. Jonathan consolidated the leading position of the Hasmoneans starting in 152 in the role of High Priest and ethnarch. He then initiated wars of expansion. His successor, Simon, used conflicts about succession in the Seleucid Empire to shake off the yoke of foreign oppression, proclaiming the first independent Judea in 450 years. As even a fleeting look at a historical map reveals, the expansion took on new dimensions in the second and third generations, under John Hyrcanus and his sons. At the latest under Alexander Jannaeus, the Jewish state had reached a size largely corresponding to that achieved at its highpoint in biblical history under David and Solomon.⁴ The following pages will focus on the character of this nearly-continuous warfare, its religious staging, and its relation to Hellenistic warfare.

The Hasmoneans evoked biblical analogies, presenting their success as a repetition of the good old age of Israel. The biblical standard emerges with most clarity in 1 Maccabees, presumably written at the

² In addition this "typology" justifies the later appropriation of the office of high priest by the Hasmoneans: see Diego Arenhoevel, *Die Theokratie nach dem 1. und 2. Makkabäerbuch* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1967), 45; Stephanie von Döbeler, *Die Bücher 1/2 Makkabäer* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1997), 60–62. Here and in the following discussion I draw on earlier material: Kai Trampedach, "Die Hasmonäer und das Problem der Theokratie," in *Die Bibel als politisches Argument: Voraussetzungen und Folgen biblizistischer Herrschaftslegitimation in der Vormoderne*, ed. Andreas Pečár and Kai Trampedach (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2007), 37–65, here 41f.

³ See Bezalel Bar-Kochva, *Judas Maccabaeus: The Jewish Struggle Against the Seleucids* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 138–145.

⁴ For a succinct summary and controversial approach to the question of Hasmonean expansion see Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society: 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 36–42.

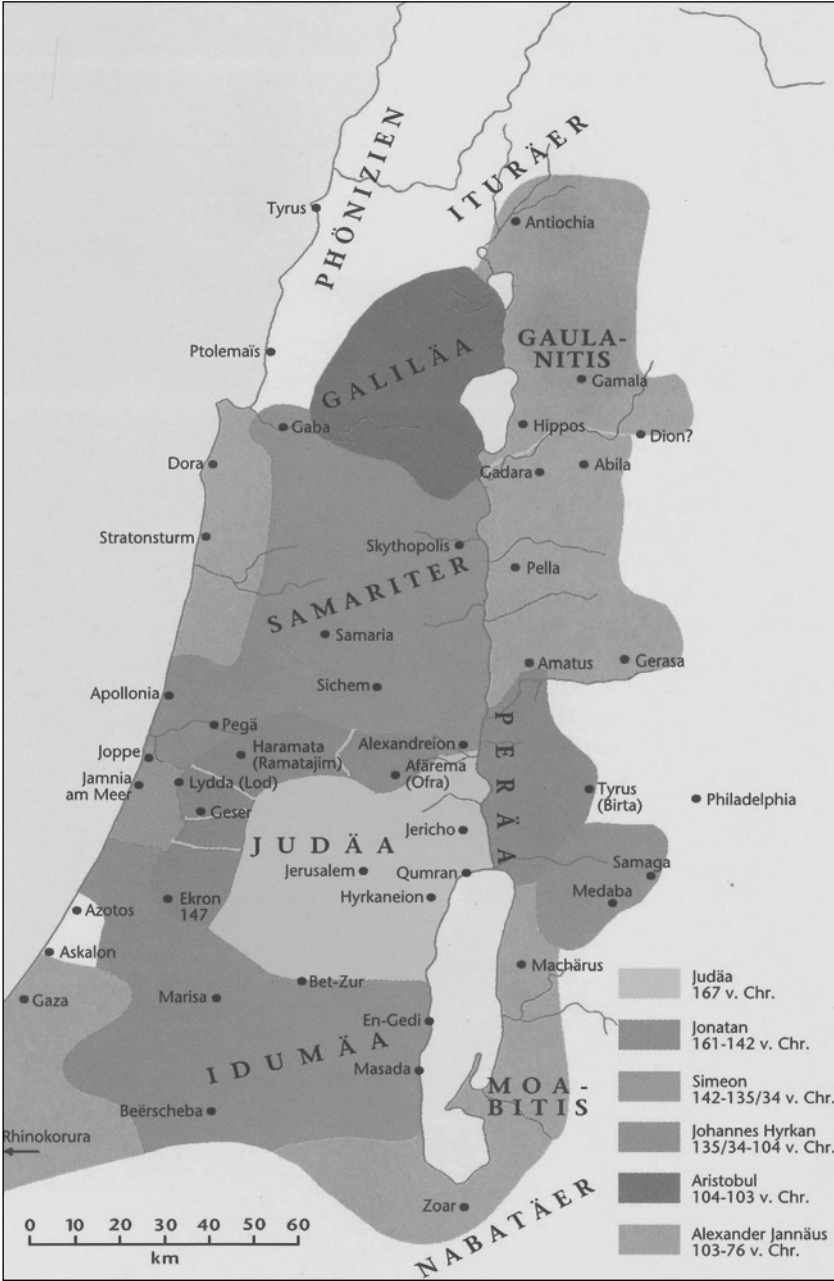


Figure 1. Map of the Hasmonean Expansion in Palestine (167–76 B.C.E.).
Stuttgarter Bibelatlas, ed. by John Strange, Stuttgart 1989, p. 53

end of the second century in Hebrew and to be understood as speaking for the Hasmoneans themselves.⁵ The talk that the author ascribes to dying Mattathias shortly after the revolt's start (1 Macc 2:49–69) itself seems to have a programmatic tenor. Mattathias here binds his sons to duty by invoking a series of familiar Biblical examples: Abraham, Joseph, Phinehas, Joshua, Caleb, David, Elijah, and Daniel are meant to demonstrate that God does not leave fidelity to his commands unrewarded. In 1 Maccabees, the Hasmonean leaders' addresses to their soldiers before large battles have the same purpose. All these speeches recall glorious miracles of the past (the parting of the Red Sea, the heroic deeds of David and Jonathan, the plague let loose in the camp of the Assyrian king Sanachherib at the siege of Jerusalem) that granted the Jewish armies clear victories despite a marked inferiority of men and weapons.

All the speeches, which are verified by the subsequent successes, explain to readers that the Hasmoneans are continuing the series of biblical heroes and can count on God's help. Through his description and choice of words, the author of 1 Maccabees resuscitates the famed epochs marked by conquest of land, the advent of the judges, and the early kingdom. As champions of God, his law, and his people, the Hasmoneans Mattathias, Judas, Jonathan, and Simon not only defeat the Seleucid armies and free Judea but also conquer neighboring regions and wage war on the surrounding peoples pressing down on Israel as in the age of judges. Even the extreme and irreconcilable enmity towards the non-Jewish ethnic groups in the Palestinian-Syrian area manifest in 1 Maccabees is derived from biblical models; this derivation is visible even on the level of individual formulations.⁶

Importantly, this backward look was not only a retrospective construction and a matter of historiographical style.⁷ The legal zeal to

⁵ See for example Bickermann, *Der Gott der Maccabäer*, 145f.; Arenhoevel, *Theokratie*, 35, 39f.; Bar-Kochva, *Judas Maccabaeus*, 151–168; von Dobbeler, *Makkabäer*, 42–44.

⁶ See Bickermann, *Gott der Maccabäer*, 28–32; Arenhoevel, *Theokratie*, 51–57; Seth Schwartz, "Israel and the Nations Roundabout: I Maccabees and the Hasmonean Expansion," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 42 (1991): 16–38, here 21–29; Trampedach, "Hasmonäer," 42–44.

⁷ Already Benedictus Niese, *Kritik der beiden Maccabäerbücher* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1900), 47–52 attributed the author of 1 Maccabees with a "starke rhetorische Ader", eine "alttestamentliche Färbung" and "bewußte Alterthümelei"; similarly Seth Schwartz, "Israel and the Nations Roundabout. I Maccabees and the Hasmonean Expansion," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 41 (1991): 33: "1 Macc's rhetoric is just rhetoric". But both the officious character of the text and the fact that the warfare described

which the Hasmoneans laid claim demanded respect for the Torah's rules of warfare. I am first of all referring here to the ritual framework for campaigns and battles: the sacrifices, prayers, rituals of atonement and thanks, and the blowing of trumpets before important battles, all acts assuring steady communication with God and both the visibility and audibility of his assistance.⁸ When, in the year 165, a large Seleucid army approached for the first time since the start of the revolt, the Jews assembled in Mizpeh "so as to be ready for battle, and to pray and to ask for mercy and compassion," (1 Macc 3:44). In this case even the choice of locus follows the biblical tradition as if it were a matter of course, for Mizpeh had already served as a popular gathering place in the age of the judges (Judg 20–21); at the same time, in the Israelite struggle against the Philistines, Samuel here produced a miracle through sacrifice of an entire lamb and prayer (1 Sam 7:5–14). Accompanied by fasting and mourning rituals, the rebels consulted the biblical oracle. The subsequent presentation of priestly garments was doubtless meant to replace both the priestly address required by the law (Deut 20:4–6) and the army's collective prayer, which had descended into war cries and sounds of trumpets. Subsequently, following the letter of the law in the first regular muster in 400 years, Judas Maccabeus divided the Jewish military contingent into units of 1000, 100, 50, and 10 men (see Ex 18:21; cf. Num 31, 48, 52; 1 Sam 8:12) and chose their leaders. And, we are told, despite the precarious situation, Judas accepted limitations from Deut 20:5–9 reducing fighting power in order to demonstrate his obedience to the law: "And he said to them that were building houses, and were betrothing wives, and were planting vineyards, and were fearful, that they should return, each man to his own house, according to the Law" (1 Macc 3:56). Hence, along with fulfilling the rite prescribed in Deut 20, Judas applied further ritual references back to the Torah to both enrich the rite and adapt it to the circumstances (something especially needed to compensate for the missing priests).⁹

Clearly, the use of a ritual framework is not unique to ancient Jewish or Hasmonean warfare since it is also found in other cultures,

by the historian largely follows the Old Testament model speak against the idea of a free-ranging and arbitrary rhetoric.

⁸ See Christophe Batsch, *La guerre et les rites dans le judaïsme du deuxième Temple*, vol. 93, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism (Leiden: Brill, 2005); on trumpets and war-cries: *ibid.* 210–215.

⁹ Batsch, *La guerre et les rites*, 89–102, esp. 90 refutes the rationalizing interpretations of Bar-Kochva, *Judas Maccabaeus*, 494–499.

especially in Rome. However, the recourse to normative texts, to holy writing, is certainly something special. But in itself, that process does not define the Hasmonean campaigns as forms of “holy war”. Rather, this definition, emerges from what we are told is the warfare’s goal, namely, the extirpation of idolatry in the Holy Land. In this regard, a methodological comment may here be useful: Contrary to both Rüpke and Batsch, I consider the concept of “holy war” productive for better understanding and systematizing certain historical phenomena. I am naturally not referring to “holy war” as a model removed from time and space; rather, it constitutes a heuristic category allowing wars putatively conducted in a “holy” way for “holy” ends to be distinguished from wars not staking such a claim. This approach is informed by the premise that such a distinction proves significant in various historical contexts, for not all “holy wars” follow the same or a similar schema.¹⁰

The war’s religious justification produced other parameters that could not always be harmonized easily: on the one hand the warfare’s holy character had to be recognizable in praxis, so that the legitimization meant to mobilize the Jewish public would appear credible. On the other hand, the interests of dynastic power were meant to be promoted, not hindered. In the following discussion, I will suggest that these parameters remained stable although the Hasmoneans adjusted the concrete formation of the “holy war” to suit changing circumstances. Three phases can here be distinguished according to the main goals and focal points of the different operations: the phase of the wars of annihilation under Judas und Jonathan, the phase of the wars of expulsion under Simon, and the phase of wars of annexation under John Hyrcanus, Aristobulus, and Alexander Jannaeus, with the tools of physical annihilation and expulsion in any event still being used when needed. I would like to now address each of these phases before drawing some general conclusions.

¹⁰ Jörg Rüpke, “Krieg,” in *Handbuch religionswissenschaftlicher Grundbegriffe*, ed. Hubert Cancik (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1993), 3: 448–460; Batsch, *La guerre et les rites*, 23–33. See also Egon Flaig’s very interesting and stimulating article “‘Heiliger Krieg.’ Auf der Suche nach einer Typologie,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 285 (2007): 265–302; on the concept itself, see *ibid.*, 265, no. 1 and 276, no. 23; on “Israel’s holy wars,” *ibid.*, 276–283.

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As can already be seen at the start of the revolt, the zeal for the law provoked in Mattathias and his followers by the Seleucid religious persecution was marked by pronounced annihilatory intentions. These were expressed above all in the civil war unleashed against putatively apostate co-religionists. In 1 Maccabees, both Mattathias and his sons, Judas and Jonathan, are praised for having moved through Judea's cities and smote, burnt, and annihilated Israel's apostates (2:44–48; 3:5–9; 7:23–24; 9:73). The subsequent war against the Seleucids was of another nature. After starting out as a guerrilla force, the Hasmoneans moved quite quickly toward assembling regular troops to confront the enemy in direct battle.¹¹ In addition, already during the time of Judas Maccabeus there were repeated negotiations with Seleucid officials. Under Jonathan, the two sides established a *modus vivendi*; despite occasional conflicts, Judean religious freedom would never be called into question in a basic way.

In any event, the campaigns against surrounding pagans that Judas Maccabeus initiated after Jerusalem's re-conquest in 165 followed the example of treating the apostates. On several occasions, Judas carried out the censure (*herem*) against hostile cities. Concerning the "children of Baean", apparently a nomadic group on the southern edge of the Jewish realm of settlement, we read that they "were unto the people a snare and a stumbling-block, lying in wait for them in the ways." They were, the author continues, "shut up" by Judas "in the towers, and he encamped against them, and utterly destroyed them, and burned with fire the towers of the place, with all that were therein" (1 Macc 5:4–5). To anathematize or pronounce *herem* on human beings, animals, or objects meant handing them over to God, in other words tabooing them and consecrating them to destruction – a procedure demanded in Deuteronomy against both pagan cities and tribes in the promised land and apostate Jewish cities (Deut 7:1–26; 13:13–19; 20:16–18). In Deuteronomy's historical narrative, the extent of the destruction such censure brings down on Israel's enemies seems to vary, moving along a scale extending from the killing of the male population to total

¹¹ On the equipment, tactics, and military leadership, together with battle and topographical analysis of the Maccabean war against the Seleucids, see Bar-Kochva, *Judas Maccabaeus*.

annihilation, movable and immovable possessions inclusive.¹² If only in their own interest, in their campaign in Idumea, Galilee, Eastern Jordan, and the Philistine coast, Judas and Jonathan were content with the “milder” variant. A typical example is Judas’ activity in Bosora, described laconically in 1 Maccabees as follows: “and he took the city, and slew all the males with the edge of the sword, and took all their spoils, and burned it (= the city) with fire” (5:28).

In this case and many others, the way *herem* is carried out corresponds to the biblical stipulation of the sword for living booty, fire for objects.¹³ In face of such an enemy, the pagan population could find no salvation in flight to their holy places: Judas and Jonathan did not hesitate to set them in flames, together with all those taking refuge there. We are also informed that the two Hasmonean leaders moved into the land of the Philistines to destroy alters and idols, and to plunder the villages and set them on fire. (1 Macc 5:43–44, 68; 10:83–85; 2 Macc 12:9, 26). *Herem* was also imposed on cities that denied peaceful passage to the Jewish troops (1 Macc 5:46–51; 2 Macc 12:27–28).¹⁴ The Maccabean leaders did not yet have the means to contemplate an enduring occupation and new settlement of the lands and cities they were attacking; rather, they limited themselves to spreading fear throughout the region and collecting a large amount of booty. Corresponding to this calculus, and in order to protect the Jews living in Galilee and Gilead from pagan revenge, Judas and his brothers saw to their resettlement in Judea (1 Macc 5:23, 45).

The Maccabean books assert that these campaigns were meant to protect Judea against hostile attack and protect the Jews living in pagan areas (1 Macc 5:1–2; 2 Macc 10:14–15). This may or may not have been the case¹⁵ what is clear is that the war’s most important

¹² See Norbert Lohfink, “heræm,” in *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1982), 3: 192–213; Richard D. Nelson, “Herem and the Deuteronomistic Social Conscience,” in *Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic Literature* (Festschrift C.H.W. Brekelmans), ed. Marc Vervenne and Richard D. Nelson (Louvain: University Press, 1997), 39–54; on *herem* of warfare in the texts of second temple Judaism see Batsch, *La guerre et les rites*, 417–429.

¹³ Lohfink, “heræm,” 196; cf. Batsch, *La guerre et les rites*, 421.

¹⁴ All of this corresponding to the model of the Torah and Deuteronomistic historiography: Ex. 23:24; 34:13; Num. 33:52; Deut. 7:5, 25; Judges 2:2; 2 Kings 10:24–27 (destruction of heathen places of worship); Deut. 20, 10–12 (denial of peaceful passage). See Batsch, *La guerre et les rites*, 438–446.

¹⁵ See Bringmann, *Hellenistische Reform*, 60f.

functions were executed along the lines of Deuteronomy, in the process reinforcing Hasmonean rule: it presented Judas and his brothers with a legitimate task, which imposed more than merely revolt, rededication of the temple, and cancellation of the religious edicts. Rather, it also allowed the Hasmoneans to appear as defenders and champions of Jewish law and resuscitate a glorious past. And finally, it set the Jewish temple-centered state into fundamental opposition with its pagan surroundings, thus creating a situation in which Hasmonean military competence was indispensable for the foreseeable future.

2

Already under Jonathan, the strategy of annihilatory campaigns was sometimes subsumed by other considerations. As a Seleucid governor, Jonathan had to operate with somewhat more restraint than his brother and predecessor Judas, who during his life had moved outside the “international” order. A new phase began under Jonathan’s successor Simon, whose campaigns were not aimed at terrorizing the surrounding pagan world but at expanding his dominion, with a special concern for maritime access. Within this strategy, the biblical *herem* no longer had a place. For this reason, Simon, who in his earlier life had assisted his brothers with fire and sword, could now show his merciful side and let the defeated pagans live. The new policy was first applied in the siege of Bethsura – a fortress city on the border with Idumaea that had long been fought over – when Simon spared those trapped inside, “but...put them out from thence, and took possession of the city, and set a garrison over it” (1 Macc 11:65–66). He dealt in a similar way with the conquest of the port city of Joppa (13:11) and even with the Jewish apostates who had taken refuge in the relatively impregnable Jerusalem towers after the Maccabean conquest of the city. The latter were allowed to surrender in turn for being allowed to withdraw unharmed: “but he cast them out from thence; and he cleansed the citadel from pollutions” (13:50). But the best example is offered by the fall of Gazara, a strategically extremely important city on the way from Jerusalem to the Joppa harbor. When after a long siege the inhabitants of Gazara were forced to surrender and begged to be spared, “he did not fight against them; but he drove them out of the city, and cleansed the houses wherein the idols were, and so entered into it with singing and giving of praise. And he put all

uncleanness out of it, and caused to dwell in it men who observed the Law" (13:47–48).¹⁶ The expulsion of the established pagan population, the ritual purification of the cities polluted by the cult of idols, and the resettlement with Jews were all instruments of a warfare continuing to be based on the Torah albeit without *herem*. The results, an expansion of a closed Jewish realm of settlement within the promised land, would itself have pleased law-abiding Jews. Through this special sort of expansion, Simon in any case certainly aware of the strategic and economic advantages tried to demonstrate the legitimacy of his status as a high priest.¹⁷

3

Through the murder of Simon in 135, Hasmonean rule faced a serious threat overcome with luck and skill by Simon's only surviving son, John Hyrcanus. After his worst enemy, Antiochus VII Sidetes, was slain by the Parthians in Babylonia in 129, Hyrcanus carefully freed himself from a Seleucid stranglehold and consolidated his rule. As archaeological discoveries in various Palestinian locations have shown, he waited until 112 to initiate war on different fronts.¹⁸ This began a new phase of expansion, carried forward by Hyrcanus' sons Aristobulus and Alexander Jannaeus; it would reveal a continuation of Simon's approach to be illusory. The size of the acquired territory allowed neither a sweeping expulsion of the pagans nor ubiquitous new Jewish settlements. Nonetheless the Hasmoneans maintained the goal of annexation, in this respect using both new and old methods.

¹⁶ Archeological finds seem to have confirmed this account. See Steven Weitzman, "Forced Circumcision and the Shifting Role of Gentiles in Hasmonean Ideology," *Harvard Theological Review* 92 (1999): 37–59, here 48f.

¹⁷ See von Dobbeler, *Maccabäer*, 129f. That many pious Jews were horrified by the idea of a warring high priest is a separate matter; see Trampedach, "Hasmonäer," 52–54; Batsch, *La guerre et les rites*, 203f.

¹⁸ The dating offered by *Josephus I–XI*, ed. H. Thackeray et al. (London: Loeb Classical Library, 1926–1965), AJ 13.254–5 and BJ 1.62–63 of Hyrcanus' conquests in the course of the second decade of the second century B.C.E. has been refuted by excavations in Marisa, Tel Beer Sheba, Mt. Garizim, Sichem, and Samaria, with above all coins, lead weights, and amphora stamps allowing quite precise dating. See: Dan Barag, "New Evidence on the Foreign Policy of John Hyrcanus I.," *Israel Numismatic Journal* 12 (1992/93): 1–12; Gerald Finkielsztein, "More Evidence on John Hyrcanus I's Conquests: Lead Weights and Rhodian Amphora Stamps," *Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society* 16 (1998): 33–63.

John Hyrcanus continued the war against the non-Jewish places of worship, responding to stubborn resistance by reverting to the annihilatory strategy of earlier days.¹⁹ He crowned his conquest of the Samaritan region in 111 B.C.E. with destruction of the city of Sichem and the Samaritan temple on Mt. Garizim (AJ 13.255–256).²⁰ To be sure, the Samaritans represented a special case; at the time they could in a certain sense be considered “Jews”, holding themselves apart simply by offering god sacrifices on Garizim instead of in Jerusalem. John Hyrcanus appears to have considered “Judaicizing” them as unnecessary. Rather, he doubtlessly expected that after their temple’s destruction they would transfer their loyalty to Jerusalem and integrate themselves into the Hasmonean state.²¹

Two years later, in 109 B.C.E., John Hyrcanus again sent a Jewish army into Samaria. This time the city of Samaria, a Macedonian colony, was the initial goal of his attack. The city’s inhabitants had not only maintained alliances with various Seleucid kings but also allowed themselves incursions against Jewish settlers and allies.²² John Hyrcanus left the siege to his sons Aristobulus and Antigonus, who finally took the city after a year marked by much bloodshed and destroyed it so thoroughly that all signs of the place ever having been settled vanished (AJ 13.275–283).²³ Since the population was sold into slavery, the Hasmoneans evidently passed off their action against Samaria as the execution of a form of *herem*. They did, however, directly stage divine approval, spreading the legend that while burning incense in the temple in his function as sole high priest, John Hyrcanus heard a voice announcing the simultaneous victory of his sons. Hyrcanus’ sons were not satisfied with Samaria’s destruction but also conquered Skythopolis and the plain of Jezreel and expelled the pagan population

¹⁹ See Aryeh Kasher, *Jews and Hellenistic Cities in Eretz-Israel* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1990), 122f., 131.

²⁰ Barag, “New Evidence,” 6f.; Edward Dabrowa, “Religion and Politics under the Hasmoneans,” in: *Altertum und Mittelmeerraum: Die antike Welt diesseits und jenseits der Levante (Festschrift Peter W. Haider)*, ed. Robert Rollinger and Brigitte Truschneegg (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2006), 113–120, here 115–118.

²¹ Seth Schwartz, “John Hyrcanus I’s Destruction of the Gerizim Temple and the Judean-Samaritan Relations,” *Jewish History* 7 (1993): 9–25, here 18; *idem*, *Imperialism and Jewish Society*, 37.

²² Kasher, *Jews and Hellenistic Cities*, 125.

²³ Barag, “New Evidence,” 7f.

(BJ 1.65ff.).²⁴ What transpired under John Hyrcanus in Samaria and Scythopolis repeated itself under Alexander Jannaeus in Straton's Tower, Dora, and Gaza. In these cases as well, a long and bloody siege ended with a massacre and the city's destruction. Josephus offers the telling detail that Alexander had 500 councilors executed in the Apollo sanctuary in Gaza where they had taken refuge (AJ 13.356–364).²⁵

With the instrument of forced circumcision, the Hasmoneans embarked on a new and far more effective path of annexation,²⁶ John Hyrcanus initiating the process by making the Idumaeans compliant through it. "After he conquered the Idumaeans cities of Adora and Marisa and subjected all Idumaeans" explains Josephus, "he allowed them to remain in their land if they let themselves be circumcised and were ready to accept the law of the Jews. And out of longing for the land of their fathers they submitted to circumcision and adapted the

²⁴ The so-called "Scroll of Fasting" (*megillat taanit*), which presumably stems from the middle of the first century C.E., lists, among other things, four holidays related to historical events from the time of John Hyrcanus and Alexander Jannaeus: the exiling of the inhabitants of Scythopolis and the plain (15 and 16 Sivan); the conquest of Samaria (25 Heshvan); the destruction of the Samaritan temple on Mt. Garizim (21 Kislev); and the conquest of Straton's Tower (14. Sivan); see Jos., AJ 13.324–335; Hans Lichtenstein, "Die Fastenrolle: Eine Untersuchung zur jüdisch-hellenistischen Geschichte," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 8/9 (1931/32): 257–351, here 287–289; Vered Noam, "Megillat Taanit – The Scroll of Fasting," in *The Literature of the Sages: Second Part*, ed. Shmuel Safrai et al. (Amsterdam: Royal Van Gorcum Fortress Press, 2006), 339–362.

²⁵ See Kasher, *Jews and Hellenistic Cities*, 142: "Jannaeus' policy of Judaization was not as totally extreme as hostile propaganda attempted to depict it; rather, he apparently contended himself with the following measures: (1) massive Jewish settlement, in order to effect a significant change in the local demographic map; (2) enforcement of Jewish law in the occupied areas; (3) revocation of the laws of the Seleucid Kingdom and the constitutions of the Hellenistic cities; (4) abolition of idolatry and prevention of its recurrence." Kasher is certainly right in assuming that some heathens remained in the areas Jannaeus conquered; otherwise Pompey and his successors would not have been able to so quickly restore the Hellenistic cities between 63 and 55. But it seems to me that Kasher is mistaken in arguing that the reports of annihilatory measures were grounded in hostile propaganda. Rather, precisely Jannaeus would have had an interest in having the measures he took against "idolaters" and their sites of worship appear as radical as possible.

²⁶ Weitzman, "Forced Circumcision," 58f. convincingly argues that the reports in the sources regarding forced circumcisions, although discounted by a significant body of scholars as anti-Hasmonean propaganda (see, e.g., Schwartz, "Israel and the Nations Roundabout," 19–21), to the contrary reflect the Hasmonean viewpoint. According to Weitzman, the fact of the integration of large non-Jewish population groups into the Hasmonean state was meant to be compensated for by the anti-pagan zeal of the forced circumcisions and thus made plausible to the Jewish public, "the absorption of local non-Jews" here being disguised "as a continuation of the Maccabean drive to retake the land for Judaism."

other customs of the Jews" (AJ 13.257–258).²⁷ But not all Idumaeans accepted the conditions.²⁸ Many went to Egypt – inscriptions from the end of the second and start of the first century B.C.E. indicate the founding of Idumaeian colonies in Memphis and Hermopolis Magna.²⁹ We may assume a priori that in Idumaea the forced circumcision was accompanied by a demolition of pagan holy sites. And in the actuality, archaeological studies have pointed to destruction of temples in Lachish and Beersheva that can be dated rather precisely to the time of Idumaea's conquest by John Hyrcanus.³⁰ When in 104–103 the king and high priest Aristobulus went to war against the Itureans and gained a great part of the land for Judea, he was following the model of his fathers. According to Josephus "he forced the inhabitants to circumcise themselves if they wished to continue living in the country and live according to the law of the Jews" (AJ 13.318–319). In turn, Alexander Jannaeus tried, with mixed success, to use forced circumcision to gain control of the cities of Gaulanitis and Moabitis (AJ 13.397).³¹ Creating lasting ties through this strategy evidently depended on social context, which is to say a certain affinity with Jewish customs already being present on the part of the subjected parties. Otherwise an easing of political pressure would have immediately led to a return of the old cultic practices and an abandonment of circumcision. In the case of the Idumaeans, whose acceptance of Judaism turned out permanent, such an affinity doubtless existed.

What renders forced circumcision an instrument of holy war? This question seems especially justified in that the instrument is not an element of biblical tradition. There are, however, two cases of circumcision in, respectively, the Greek version of Esther (8:17) and the Book

²⁷ Cf. Strabo 16.2.34; Ptolemy (*Fragmente griechischer Historiker* [ed. Jacoby] 199) F 1. The analysis of the sources by Shaye J.D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 110–119 is not convincing: he first exaggerates the differences between the various sources; then he denies the obvious (*ibid.*, 118: "Our sources give no indication that the Hasmoneans in any of their other numerous conquests and depredations were determined to wipe out either idolaters or idolatry"), in order to finally maintain that "the novelty of Hyrcanus' and Aristobulus' actions is apparent" (*ibid.*, 118). In this manner he maintains a position directly contrary to my own.

²⁸ Settlement ended in Marisa in 112/11 or soon afterwards: Barag, "New Evidence," 5.

²⁹ Uriel Rappaport, "Les Iduméens en Égypte," *Revue de Philologie* 43 (1969): 73–82; Finkelsztejn, "More Evidence," 42f.; Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness*, 115.

³⁰ Barag, "New Evidence," 6; Finkelsztejn, "More Evidence," 48, 55, no. 6.

³¹ Kasher, *Jews and Hellenistic Cities*, 156–159.

of Judith (14:6–10) that can hardly be considered voluntary. In Esther we read that “many of the Gentiles were circumcised and professed Judaism, because of fear of the Jews.” Only a small step separates fear-induced voluntary circumcision from forced circumcision. Both passages presumably stem from the Hasmonean Period and show that the idea of a circumcision of non-Jews may very well have been circulating.³² But an even stronger factor behind this was evidently the role forced circumcision could play in expanding the Jewish law’s jurisdiction in the promised land: even the most pious and law-abiding Jews could not object to it. And finally, as with the campaigns of annihilation and expulsion, ideas of purity seem to play an important role here. If idolatry produces impurity and this is contagious (an idea not only found in numerous passages of the Hebrew Bible but also in 2 Macc (12:38–45) in a striking manner),³³ then protection can only come from the sources of the disease. The impure, that is, the pagans and apostates, had to be either annihilated or expelled, or else subjected to a purification ritual such as circumcision and thus, as it were, neutralized. After the destruction of the pagan religious sites and expulsion of the uncircumcised, the land and the population lost their hostile character and could no longer be the object of a holy war. Circumcision allowed the Idumaeans and Itureans to enter the Jerusalem Temple and participate in public religious celebrations.³⁴ In this way, though not yet authentically Jewish, they entered the circle of mutual Jewish solidarity. In short, through the forced circumcisions, the Hasmoneans succeeded in not only expanding their sphere of influence and gaining new subjects but also in increasing Israel’s distance from the sphere of impurity.

In conclusion, I would like to make five observations meant to illuminate the Hasmonean actions in their Hellenistic context. Firstly, most of the Hasmonean methods for dealing with those who lost wars against them are not basically different from the standard of the age: destruction of conquered cities, laying waste of the land, expulsion and enslavement of the defeated population were widespread

³² Weitzman, “Forced Circumcision,” 43 no. 26 (on Esther 8:17); 57f. (on Judith 14:6–10).

³³ Batsch, *La guerre et les rites*, 421–423, 438–446.

³⁴ Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness*, 123–125.

phenomena accompanying Hellenistic wars.³⁵ In contrast, the forced circumcisions and the deliberate destructions of temples represented specific Jewish instruments. The mass killings practiced particularly by Judas Maccabeus and Jonathan in their campaigns against neighboring peoples were generally rare in military campaigns of the Hellenistic period. In any event, the most important differences between the Hasmonean Jewish and Hellenistic approach to waging war are not located in the realm of phenomena but on the level of goals and justifications. In an unprecedented way, the Hasmoneans tried to create a space that was homogenous in a religio-ethnic sense. The results of this policy are evident in archaeological findings made in various Galilean, Samaritan, and Idumaeon locations: recent excavations and surveys, especially in Jotapata but in other Galilean loci as well, point to an abrupt change from pagan to Jewish settlement at the end of the second century.³⁶ According to what Amphora stamps reveal, with the beginning of Hasmonean rule, the importation of Rhodian wine suddenly ends in locations such as Gazara (141/127), Sichem, Marisa (112), Beersheva (112), Lachish, Samaria (110), and Scythopolis (108).³⁷ Not only the contents but also the vessels themselves were avoided in the newly acquired regions (as in the heartland), as shown in the extensive absence of imported ceramics (of both a practical and luxury nature) in the Hasmonean realm.³⁸ This “economic isolationism” was based on ideas of purity expressed in an abhorrence of anything that could have contact with pagan cultic practice. In this way, with a sense

³⁵ Angelos Chaniotis, *War in the Hellenistic World* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 121–137.

³⁶ David Adan-Bayewitz and Mordechai Aviam, “Jotapata, Josephus, and the Siege of 67: Preliminary Report on the 1992–94 seasons,” *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 10 (1997): 131–165, here 160f., 164f; Mordechai Aviam, *Jews, Pagans and Christians in the Galilee* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2004), 41–50, esp. 48f.

³⁷ Finkielsztein’s conclusions in “More Evidence” (38–41, 52–54) rest on the analysis of Amphora stamps from Rhodes found in Jerusalem, Gazara, Sichem, Marisa, Beersheva, Lachish, Samaria, and Scythopolis. What is the case for wine may also be the case for oil: in the Hasmonean period numerous “industrial” oil presses were apparently set up in the Galilee (see Aviam, *Jews, Pagans and Christians in the Galilee*, 51–58, esp. 54–56); this massive expansion of oil production was perhaps meant to satisfy a need for kosher oil.

³⁸ Andrea Berlin, “Jewish Life Before the Revolt: the Archaeological Evidence,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 36 (2005), 417–470. Instead of Hellenistic-Phoenician ware, special limestone vessels were used; at the same time, with the Hasmonean conquest we find stepped basins for ritual baths (*mikvot*) that point to the importance of ritual law. See: Adan-Bayewitz and Aviam, “Jotapata,” 164f. See E.P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief* 63 B.C.E–66 C.E. (London: SCM Press, 1992), 216, 222–230.

of the historical context, the end of the import of food and ceramics produced by non-Jews can be understood as reflecting a purification of the newly conquered areas.³⁹

Secondly, as it was exercised by high priests and ethnarchs, the ruling authority of the Hasmoneans, especially before Aristobulus' adoption of the Hellenistic royal title in 104, formally only extended to Jews; that alone was sufficient reason to tie the expansion to the greatest possible Judaization. Outwardly they used the same sorts of mythic-historical arguments that had always been commonplace in Greece to justify expansion. In 138 Antiochus VII Sidetes asked the high priest Simon, among others, for return of the occupied cities outside the Judean realm; Simon answered, according to 1 Macc, as follows: "We have neither taken other men's land, nor have we possession of that which appertaineth to others, but of the inheritance of our fathers; howbeit, it was had in possession of our enemies wrongfully for a certain time. But we, having [taken] the opportunity, hold fast the inheritance of our fathers" (15:33–34).⁴⁰ Other than in Antiochus' address, Simon's "we" is not dynastic but ethnic in nature.⁴¹ Although the "certain time" of which Simon speaks, when the paternal inheritance allegedly was lost, already lies centuries back, it is held steadily in the present through the holy writings.

Thirdly, one objection here could be that the consistent reference to the Bible is, in fact, simply an idiosyncratic construct of the author of 1 Maccabees, without practical ramifications. It is the case that our two other main sources (Josephus and 2 Maccabees) both more or less dispense with descriptions of Hasmonean warfare in light of biblical traditions. But why this is so quickly becomes clear when we take account of the situation of each text's writing and its circle of addressees. By their very nature, the biblical references could only have an apologetic function for a Jewish public, and this particularly in the Hasmonean area of rule. We should also note that the image of Hasmonean warfare

³⁹ Sean Freyne, "Galileans, Phoenicians, and Itureans: A Study of Regional Contrasts in the Hellenistic Age," in *Hellenism in the Land of Israel*, ed. John J. Collins and Gregory E. Sterling (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2001), 182–215, here 202–205; Weitzman, "Forced Circumcision," 49.

⁴⁰ Doron Mendels, *The Land of Israel as a Political Concept in Hasmonean Literature* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1987), 47–49, 66f.

⁴¹ See in contrast, for example, the repeated appeal to dynastic legal titles by Polybius, *The Histories I–VI*, ed. W.R. Paton (London: Loeb Classical Library, 1922), 5.67; 18.51.3–6.

painted by both 2 Macc and Josephus are along the same lines, so that the relationship to the Bible can be tied in there without further explanation. In addition, we have the fact that in Jewish writing of the time, the theme of an ideal warfare resting on biblical tradition generally takes on a central role and this both in the apocalyptic-eschatological and nomistic literature.⁴² It seems reasonable to view this as, in part, a reaction to and grappling with the Hasmonean concept of war.

Fourthly, the Hasmoneans had to justify their continuous warfare before the Jewish public. By staging their campaigns as holy wars, they were reacting to a cultural milieu in which victory and conquest represented no value in themselves, but in which rule had to prove itself through faithfulness to the revealed law. The staging thus evolved in the way it had recourse to the normative text. Where at the start the Hasmoneans appear to have aimed at a realization of Deuteronomy's rules for warfare that was as true to the letter as possible, in later phases the relation to the Bible seems mediated by the concept of purity.⁴³ In any case, the Hasmoneans needed holy war to stay in power. It presented them with a task that they carried out as an instrument transcending the Maccabean Revolt. It legitimated their political-military leadership and furnished them with a framework in which their accomplishments for God and his chosen people were visible.

Finally, the war of the Hasmoneans can be understood as an effort to unify the Hellenistic ideal of rule, oriented as it was around military successes, with the demands of Jewish law. Both the acceptance of the title of king and the self-representation at burial sites and palaces show that the Hasmoneans wished to count for something in

⁴² Batsch, *La guerre et les rites*, 447–461. The book's last words (461) clarify why the war has this significance. "Dans les écrits juifs de l'époque du deuxième Temple, la guerre apparaît essentiellement comme le moment où s'éprouve la bonne compréhension, qu'ont les hommes, de la volonté divine dans l'Histoire. La divinité intervient dans l'Histoire des Juifs, donc dans l'Histoire des hommes, par le moyen des guerres des Juifs. La guerre juive est une théophanie."

⁴³ In contrast to other authors (Schwartz, Cohen, Weitzman) I see no practical contradiction at work in the Hasmoneans having made use of biblical polyphony while suiting the manner of their recourse to foundational texts to political circumstances. Once Deuteronomy was no longer suitable for justifying the expansion, other concepts were foregrounded. Religious legitimation was thus always adapted to political necessity. For this reason, we do not need to confirm, as does Dabrowa, "Religion and Politics," 118, "a dramatic departure from the spirit of Biblical tradition." Some contemporaries perhaps saw things as does Dabrowa, others not. There were various traditions, and doubtless the Hasmoneans led a tireless struggle against idolatry in the spirit of Israel's religious tradition.

the Hellenistic world as well. And they could, in fact, show considerable achievement: in a time of decline for the greater Hellenistic kingdoms, they still expanded significantly. But the external and the internal perspective, Hellenistic kingship and Jewish high priesthood, did not harmonize well with each other; in this respect a special bone of contention was the mercenary guard that had become indispensable for the Hasmoneans, beginning with John Hyrcanus. In addition, from the start there were important piety groups and groups of scribes who rejected the Hasmoneans' militant interpretation of the Bible. As a wide range of texts from Qumran and the Pseudepigrapha shows, many people considered the war against apostates and pagans, which the Hasmoneans justified in terms of biblical models, not as a holy and God-pleasing enterprise, but as a banal campaign of plunder with base motives.⁴⁴ The critique articulated in contemporary Jewish sources was sparked by the practice of holy war. Whether its goals or even the concept itself were criticized is unclear, but it seems improbable in a period when war was understood as a form of theophany.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Trampedach, "Hasmonäer," 52–55; the evidence brought together there should be supplemented with the following article: Lawrence H. Schiffman, "Legislation Concerning Relations with Non-Jews in the Zadokite Fragments and in Tannaitic Literature," *Revue de Qumran* 11 (1983): 379–389, here 380–385.

⁴⁵ See n. 42 above.

THE VENERATION OF THE MACCABEAN BROTHERS IN
FOURTH CENTURY ANTIOCH: RELIGIOUS COMPETITION,
MARTYRDOM, AND INNOVATION

Johannes Hahn

Fata habent libelli – this far more applies to traditions that preserve memory and thereby establish identity. The influences that assert themselves over the course of centuries are complex, as are the various interests that may become interwoven with them. Both the history of the different Maccabean books and the tradition of the Maccabees themselves illustrate this complexity in an exemplary manner. The extraordinary influence that the accounts of the warriors and martyrs for faith have exerted over the course of two millennia obscures the fact that partly irreconcilable, mutually distant historical episodes and points of reference form their basis and that diverging elements and originally independent narratives have either been merged or tied together. It is this extremely complex process of narrative intertwining, which even modern historical criticism can scarcely unravel, and it is this richness of facets that has contributed decisively to the persistent fascination with and continued reshaping of the Maccabean story. Moreover, it is this process that has given the history of a conflict between Jews true to their faith and their profane rulers such a tremendous potential for re-interpretation.

The strand of Maccabean tradition that will be analyzed here, namely, the veneration of the Maccabean martyrs in late antique Syrian Antioch, results from a threefold process of usurpation and re-interpretation. Firstly, the designation of the seven brothers and their mother as Maccabees, who one after the other suffer terrible martyrdoms at the hands of the tyrant Antiochus IV Epiphanes in emulation of the venerable Eleazar, lacks any foundation: there is no indication that they were kin with the Hasmonean or Maccabean family. The designation is owed to the literary placement of the account of the seven youths' unshakeable faith in the larger context of the revolt against Seleucid rule initiated by Mattathias and his clan, the Maccabees, or, the Hasmonean house. For the first time, this placement is historically documented in the First Book of Maccabees. Later on, however,

the relationship between the mother and her seven sons and the Has-moneans take on an entirely new literary and theological form in the Second and Fourth Books of the Maccabees.

Secondly, the admission of the account of the martyrdom of the seven brothers and their mother into the Second Book of Maccabees – the episode is not mentioned in the first book¹ – is nothing other but a literary usurpation. For it appears certain that the book's literary basis, a lost five-volume work of historiography from the pen of a certain Jason of Cyrene epitomized at some point before the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple by Titus in 70 C.E., did not contain the account.² It seems, rather, that the seventh chapter in which it has been preserved – the chapter that would eventually constitute the fame of 2 Maccabees – is a post-Jasonic addition, as are many other sections of the second half of the book. The account is, for instance, based on an original Hebrew text; it is also characterized by a belief in resurrection difficult to reconcile with either the revolt's earlier date or theological program (as expressed in 1 Macc and 2 Macc 1–6).³

The episodes of the martyrdom of Eleazar and that of the seven brothers and their mother in 2 Maccabees are thus grounded in entirely different traditions, the origins of which can only be identified in detail in a hypothetical manner.⁴ In any event, the later Christian

¹ The author of 1 Macc can hardly have been familiar with the episode, since he would probably not have failed to incorporate it. See Arnaldo Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom. The Limits of Hellenization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 103–106; Christian Habicht, 2. *Makkabäerbuch. Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit*, vol. 1: *Historische und legendarische Erzählungen* (Gütersloh: Verlags-haus Gerd Mohn, 1979), 171.

² On the question of dating, see Habicht, 2. *Makkabäerbuch*, 169–177 (very concise); Harold W. Attridge, “2 Maccabees,” in: *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, ed. Michael E. Stone (Assen-Philadelphia: Van Gorcum-Fortress Press, 1984), 176–183; Jan Willem van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People. A Study of 2 and 4 Maccabees*, vol. 57, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 50–56; and most recently Raphaëlle Ziadé, *Les martyrs Maccabées: de l'histoire juive au culte chrétien. Les homélies de Grégoire de Nazianze et de Jean Chrysostome*, vol. 80, Supplements of Vigiliae Christianae (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 50–54 (each work treats the older literature extensively).

³ See the succinct and excellent descriptions in Habicht, 2. *Makkabäerbuch*, 173–175, who documents further layers of editing. A recent detailed treatment in English is Daniel R. Schwartz, 2 *Maccabees, Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2008).

⁴ As compared to 1 Macc the rendition of Eleazar's martyrdom in 2 Macc reveals considerable modifications; here, an older version, presumably going back to Jason, has been merged with a more recent version. See Habicht, 2. *Makkabäerbuch*, 173 (with reference to P. Katz).

tradition transferred the book's title to the brothers and, as a sign of the extraordinary value it placed on this specific episode, "ennobled" large parts of the Maccabean corpus by accepting it into the canon. The Maccabean tradition found its way into both the Christian reception and Christian biblical manuscripts, – for instance the important codices Sinaiticus (4th c.) and Alexandrinus (5th c.) – in the shape it took in 4 Maccabees: a "philosophical" version of the martyrologies, which may have been composed in the middle of the first century C.E. and which took the form of a wisdom text or diatribe.⁵ Marked by a fusion of Greek rhetoric and popular philosophy, this text underlines the rule of reason over both the affects and the strengths of Jewish faith. It thus offers a remarkable bridge between Judaism and Hellenism. In its geographic origins, it doubtless belongs to the Diaspora. Alexandria and, most notably, Antioch have been repeatedly proposed as the most likely environs for the anonymous Jewish author.⁶ If Antioch is indeed the proper location, then, in light of the later intensive veneration of the Maccabean brothers in the area, the text may even have contributed essentially to the local cult's emergence.

The question of where, precisely, the version of the seven brothers' martyrdom material to the Christian tradition originated is of relevance because of its possible connection to the third usurpation manifest in the Maccabean context: all of the Maccabean books explicitly or implicitly place the martyrdoms – initially only Eleazar's martyrdom, but later also that of the brothers and mother – in the sole historically relevant context, namely that of the Maccabean revolt and here the taking of Jerusalem by Antiochus IV in 168 B.C.E. Nevertheless, in Late Antiquity, we suddenly find the Syrian city of Antioch harboring a burial-place and site of veneration for the latter group of martyrs. From Syria and Antioch, the Maccabean veneration within

⁵ On the question of dating see the summary by Hans-Josef Klauck, 4. *Makkabäerbuch. Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit III 6* (Gütersloh: Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1989), 668f. (668: "die ernsthaft diskutierten Vorschläge konzentrieren sich auf den Zeitraum von ca. 30 n. Chr.–120 n. Chr.") and Ziadé, *Les martyrs Maccabées*, 50–55. It has to be noted that some researchers even consider it possible that the text emerged under Trajan or Hadrian. On the question of the character and genre of the text see Klauck, 4. *Makkabäerbuch*, 659f.; van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 60–67.

⁶ On this question see Joachim Jeremias, *Heiligengräber in Jesu Umwelt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958), 19; Margaret Schatkin, "The Maccabean Martyrs," *Vigiliae Christianae* 28 (1974): 97–113, 98; Klauck, 4. *Makkabäerbuch*, 667 (Antioch as "wahrscheinlich die beste Lösung").

the Christian imperial Church progresses from the fourth century onwards. Thus, in 388, Ambrosius, Bishop of Milan, can already describe the celebration of the festival of the Maccabees as an established custom, at least in the eastern part of the empire. Possibly as early as shortly after 350, a Syrian martyrology offers August 1 as the brothers' commemoration day.⁷ Rabbinic Judaism in turn, though it maintained the memory of the martyrdom of the seven brothers and their mother, radically divested it of its original historical context and named neither a locus nor a persecuting monarch for the event.⁸ There is likewise no mention of a subsequent veneration of the Maccabean martyrs, let alone of a series of rituals in their honor fixed to a particular place or day of commemoration.

The Antiochian tradition of a local tomb for the Maccabean brothers is first identifiable in mid-fourth century sources. Putting aside later Arabic tradition, it is exclusively Christian authors who attest to both a Jewish place of veneration – perhaps even a synagogue atop the tomb – and the intensive veneration of the place by Antiochian Christians. At an unknown time and in equally unknown circumstances, the site would become the property of the metropolitan Church; it appears to have been transformed into a basilica around 400 C.E.⁹

These surprising findings in addition to the local religious relations and circumstances they point to, pose many problems – hardly any of

⁷ Ep. 74, 16 (CSEL 82/3, 64 Zelzer) = ep. 40, 17 (PL 16, col. 1107). Ambrose here refers to a festival of the Maccabees in Callinicum on the Euphrates. Against the background of the argumentative intention of the letter to Emperor Theodosius – following the burning of the synod in Callinicum by the local bishop and a Christian mob – it is not certain whether Ambrose is generalizing.

⁸ Julian Oberman, "The Sepulchre of the Maccabean Martyrs," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 50 (1931): 250–265, 252f.; Robert Doran, "The Martyr: A Synoptic of the Mother and Her Seven Sons," in *Figures in Ancient Judaism: Ideal Profiles and Paradigm*, ed. John Joseph Collins and George W.E. Nickelsburg, vol. 12, Septuagint and Cognate Studies (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980), 183–221, with reference to the evidence in the tractates and the Midrashim (bGit 57b; Ekha R on 1.16⁹; PesR 43; SER 30, 151 etc.; then also *Sefer Yosippon*). The martyrdom is occasionally even dated to the time of the revolt against Rome – under Vespasian and Trajan or Hadrian. See also Klauck, 4. *Makkabäerbuch*, 656f. On the Jewish veneration of the Maccabees see also Joan E. Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places. The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 49ff., 322ff.

⁹ Lothar Triebel, "Die angebliche Synagoge der makkabäischen Märtyrer in Antiochia am Orontes," *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 9 (2006): 464–495, provides the most detailed discussion of all the evidence with many helpful references. However, his article suffers from a one-sided focus (grounded in the history of research) on the question of the existence of a Maccabean martyrs' synagogue in Antioch.

them can be solved definitely. But regardless of the disparate and one-sided transmission of this information and because of the first-time and singular veneration of Jewish martyrs by Christians at this locus, Antioch, and its appropriation by the Christian Church, the historian is called on to consider the conditions under which such a remarkable spiritual and religio-political development could have taken place: a development whose impact would extend into the Latin West and the Modern Age.

What must remain unexplained above all is the context for the establishment of an Antioch-based Jewish tradition of a burial site of the Maccabean brothers. A concrete basis for such a localized tradition, apart from the name of the "Antiochus city" itself (which was, however, founded by Seleucus I Nicator in 300 B.C.E.) and the fact that it also served as capital for the rule of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, can only be found in a late source, the *Chronicle* of John Malalas completed after 565 C.E. In this text, which is as imaginative as it is historically questionable, Palestinian Jews call on Antiochus Epiphanes in Antioch and, by complaining about their ruler Ptolemy, prompt the Seleucid's Egyptian expedition. However, Antiochus later turned against Jerusalem, conquered the city and took the high priest Eleazar and "the Maccabees" back to Antioch where they suffered their martyrdom. According to Malalas, a gravesite for the seven brothers (no more references to Eleazar are made) was only established years later allegedly through none other than Judas Maccabeus, this initiative being described as one of his key accomplishments besides the restoration of the Jerusalem Temple.¹⁰

Because of its confused historical intermingling, this account of the tomb's origins can easily be identified as a later fabrication, which may have suffered additional damage through the Byzantine chronicler's own personal misunderstandings. In its core, it reflects the fact, also attested to elsewhere, that the tomb was located in direct proximity to a synagogue "in the so-called Kerateion" – the latter apparently being a southern district of Antioch.¹¹

¹⁰ Joh. Malal., *Chron.* 8, 24 (p. 207 Z. 10f., Dindorf).

¹¹ Carl H. Kraeling, "The Jewish Community at Antioch," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 51 (1932): 130–160, 140f.; Glanville Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 544 and note 179. In order to solve the problem of the breach of taboo committed by a burial within the city's bounds (permissible in the case of heroes), it has been alternatively suggested that the martyrs' shrine was located in Daphne either alongside of or within

The beginnings of the Jewish veneration of the Maccabean brothers in Antioch can hardly be determined. The extraordinary significance of precisely this city for Hellenistic Jewry is reflected in the fact that, according to later rabbinic tradition, the lake of Antioch, located 14 kilometers northeast of the city, was considered one of the seven lakes surrounding the Land of Israel.¹² Since the city's Seleucid founding, its Jewish community was highly privileged and may have constituted the most populous Jewish community in the Diaspora well into Roman times and Late Antiquity. It continued to flourish there largely unmolested. Its fate under Antiochus IV Epiphanes, however, is undocumented and allows only for speculation.¹³ It is possible that the Jews of Antioch were even able to profit from the Temple's plundering in 168 B.C.E., for cultic vessels that had been seized there are reported to have been subsequently donated by a Seleucid monarch and displayed in the city's synagogue.¹⁴

Nevertheless, under Roman rule in 40 C.E., and then again during the Jewish Revolt of 66–70 C.E., pogrom-like raids broke out against the Jews in Antioch.¹⁵ Whether this experience of persecution has had an influence on the development of local Maccabees-centered traditions, for instance, the composition of the Fourth Book of Maccabees or the establishment of a *memoria* of any kind, must remain unanswered.¹⁶ What needs to be underlined is the marked presence, during the Principate, of a Jewish population in the city, which may have amounted to several tens of thousands of people and which was even

the synagogue of Matrona. The problem of the shrine's location will not be discussed any further as it has only marginal relevance for my main arguments.

¹² Alexander Kohut, "Lakes of the Holy Land," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 4 (1892): 692–696, with sources and discussion.

¹³ See for example Downey, *A History of Antioch*, 108–111.

¹⁴ At least Joseph., *Bell. Jud.* 7, 44 states the latter. See Downey, *A History of Antioch*, 109 n. 106.

¹⁵ In their course (documented in detail) it was first demanded of Titus that the Jews be driven from the city, then that their communal privileges be done away with by the citizens' council and the senate. See Joseph., *Bell. Jud.* 2, 18, 5; 7, 3, 2–4 and 5,2. See also Joh. Malal., *Chron.* 10,45 (p. 260f., Dindorf). On the anti-Jewish pogrom of 70 A.D. see esp. Downey, *A History of Antioch*, 205f., 586f. There is no evidence of any further anti-Jewish riots in Antioch during the ensuing period and well into Late Antiquity.

¹⁶ The composition of 4 Macc in Antioch around the middle of the first century would be consistent with this assumption. It could offer an explanation for the (evidently fictional) grave inscription for the victims of the martyrdom offered by the author at the end of the book.

represented in the city council.¹⁷ In any case, the possible beginnings, character, and shape of a Jewish site of Maccabean veneration at this time remain wholly unclear; the same applies to the role it may have played within the Jewish community of Antioch and beyond. Whether or not Christians had any knowledge of the Syrian metropolis as a relevant location in the third century, when the Maccabean brothers had come to be likewise recognized by Christians as forerunners and models for the experience of persecution and had begun to gain high esteem in church circles, remains all the more unclear. The earliest references in patristic literature for both Christian interest in the Maccabean brothers and the appreciation of their martyrdom, namely in Origen and Cyprian, offer no indication of such knowledge – just as the Maccabean books with which those authors were familiar furnish no corresponding (Syrian) locale.¹⁸

Fourth century Antioch thus was the point of origin for an astonishing, indeed unique development: a Jewish site for the veneration of genuinely Jewish martyrs, the Maccabean brothers, receives extraordinary veneration among the Christians of Antioch and beyond. Having

¹⁷ In passing, Joh. Malal., *Chron.* 12, 16 (p. 290, Dindorf) mentions a certain Asabinus as a member of the *Boule* for 190 C.E. (he may have been the founder of a like-named synagogue). On the history of Jews in the Roman Empire see Wayne A. Meeks and Robert L. Wilken, *Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries of the Common Era. Society of Biblical Literature*, vol. 13, Sources for Biblical Studies, (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), 2–6; Robert L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews. Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century*, vol. 4, The Transformation of the Classical Heritage (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 1983), 34–65; Johannes Hahn, “Die jüdische Gemeinde im spätantiken Antiochia,” in *Jüdische Gemeinden und Organisationsformen von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Robert Jütte and Abraham P. Kustermann, vol. 2, Aschkenas Beihefte (Vienna-Cologne-Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 1996), 53–85; Johannes Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt. Studien zu den Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Christen, Heiden und Juden im Osten des Römischen Reiches (von Konstantin bis Theodosius II.)*, vol. 8, Klio-Beihefte (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2004), 139–145. Kraeling, *The Jewish Community at Antioch*, 136 estimates the city’s Jewish community under Augustus at 45,000 and in the fourth century at 65,000 persons. The latter figure is probably an upper limit; cf. Meeks and Wilken, *Jews and Christians in Antioch*, 8 and Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt*, 140. In any case, all estimates must remain mere speculation.

¹⁸ Origen., *Exhort. ad mart.* 23ff. (p. 3ff., Koetschau); Cyprian., *Fort.* (p. 337ff., Hartel); Cyprian., *Ep.* 58,6; Lucif. *Cagl.*, *De non parc. in deum delinqu.* (PL 13, col. 958); Martyr. *Carth.*, sub Aug. 1 (p. 5, Lietzmann, 1911); Martyr. *Syr.*, sub Aug. 1 (p. 13, Lietzmann, 1911). See also Mariano Rampolla del Tindaro, “Martyre et sépulture des Macchabées,” *Revue de l’art chrétien* 48 (1899): 290–305, 377–392, 457–465, see 290–292; William H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church. A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 20f.

been forced to deal with the challenge this poses, the local Christian Church appropriates the site in unknown circumstances sometime after 350 C.E., at the latest shortly before 400 C.E., and transforms this popular site of pilgrimage into a basilica at approximately the same time.¹⁹

This unprecedented appropriation of Jewish martyrs as Christian figures of identification, in particular in the context of the processes of religious transformation and Christianity's triumphal march in the fourth century, calls for an explanation. However, contemporary explanations of or comments on the phenomenon are missing. Merely the fact of popular Christian veneration of these martyrs can be gathered from a number of sermons by John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nazianzus, and other representatives of the Church. These Christian sources offer no information on previous *commonly practiced* veneration by the two religious groups, no details about the cultic site's transition to administrative control and ownership by Antioch's Church, about possible conflicts with Jewish groups in the city in the run-up to the transition or in its direct context, or about the attitude then adopted towards Jews wishing to continue their veneration. Therefore, it is only possible to explain the apparently rapid increase in the veneration of the Maccabean brothers in Antioch – also by members of the Christian community – over the course of the fourth century, and to reconstruct the constellations of both local religious life and religio-political conflict that enlighten this influential dynamic of religious change, through close scrutiny of the specific circumstances of religious life within the city.

Before turning to this topic, we should note several points regarding the veneration of Old Testament saints in Christian church circles. From very early on, representatives of Jewish salvation history were

¹⁹ Augustin., Sermon 300, 6 (PL 38, col. 1379). Further reports, none of them helping to clarify the question of dating, in Schatkin, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 104. Leonard V. Rutgers, "The Importance of Scripture in the Conflict of Jews and Christians: The Example of Antioch," in *The Use of Sacred Books in the Ancient World*, ed. Leonard V. Rutgers et al. (Louvain: Peeters, 1998), 287–303, offers the radical thesis that the Maccabees cult in Antioch did not emerge from a Jewish site of veneration but was a Christian invention; the thesis – which I will not address here in detail – seems to ignore a series of basic facts or to formulate faulty interpretations. In this respect it should be noted that John Malalas, although a sixth century author, had access to sometimes excellent local sources, evidently through a city chronicle. See most recently Wolfgang Liebeschuetz, "Malalas on Antioch," in *Antioche de Syrie. Histoire, images et traces de la ville antique*, vol. 5, TOPOI Suppléments, ed. Bernadette Cabouret, Pierre-Louis Gatier and Catherine Saliou (Lyon: De Boccard, 2004), 143–153.

venerated within the Church. Alongside the patriarchs and various prophets,²⁰ the veneration primarily centered on those Old Testament protagonists, who appeared to anticipate Christian ideas of physical torment, mortal danger, and miraculous, divinely inspired deliverance in an exceptional manner. Daniel, Isaac, the three youths in the furnace, but also Noah and Jonah represented this type of proto-martyr for just that reason; their stories formed a motif depicted more often than almost any other in Early Christian art.²¹ In the context of the incipient martyrs' veneration – a phenomenon of particular relevance for the fourth century – Antioch played a major role. The discovery of the Holy Land through Helena Augusta and Constantine, its rapid development by the erection of church buildings, – for example at the oak of Abraham in Mamre – the voyages of simple Christians as pilgrims to Palestine, and the emerging cult of relics led to a new and intensive interest in both the religious history of Israel and the range of protagonists within that history. Moreover, it strengthened the conviction among Christians of having entered into the tradition of the *one* divinely chosen people.²²

The use of parts of the Torah or Old Testament in Christian worship coincided with a specific Christian perception: their selection spotlighted the significance of the Old Testament as a prophetic text, which contained pre-figurations of Christ.²³ In this broad context, both

²⁰ Here, too, distinct points of emphasis are manifest insofar as individual prophets were foregrounded, because Christians tied them to aspects of resurrection: "Some saints, notably Enoch and Elujah, rid themselves of the current 'materialized life,' which is 'with the flesh,' to reenter paradise. In the resurrection, the body will be stripped of its 'earthy dwelling' of a fleshly body and be 're clothed' in a 'heavenly dwelling' of the 'light' and 'luminous' body that was Adam's original garb"; Richard A. Layton, *Didymus the Blind and His Circle in Late-Antique Alexandria: Virtue and Narrative in Biblical Scholarship* (Urbana-Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 107.

²¹ Among many discussions, see Graydon F. Snyder, *Ante pacem. Archaeological Evidence of Church Life before Constantine* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1985, 2003); Robin M. Jensen, *Understanding Early Christian Art* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Reiner Sörries, *Daniel in der Löwengrube. Zur Gesetzmäßigkeit frühchristlicher Ikonographie* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2005).

²² The development of the reception of Moses in the fourth century, as discernible from the *Vita Moysis* by Gregory of Nyssa (Grégoire de Nyse: *La vie de Moïse*, ed. Jean Daniélou, vol. 1, *Sources Chrétiennes* [Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1955]), is exemplary in this context: In his practiced virtue and spiritual vocation, Moses is molded into the archetype of a contemporary Church leader. See Andreas Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church. The Monk-Bishop in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), 110–117.

²³ Gerhard Rouwhorst, "The Reading of Scripture in Early Christian Liturgy," in *What Athens has to Do with Jerusalem. Essays on Classical, Jewish and Early Christian*

the veneration of the Jewish Maccabean brothers – who were associated with expressions of the belief in resurrection – and its powerful expansion throughout the Christian world during the fourth century turn out to be far less surprising than initially thought. In reality, the widespread scholarly overestimation of the expansion of the veneration of the Maccabean brothers within the Church probably resulted, to a significant degree, from the veneration of the like-named heroes of the Jewish liberation-struggle with the Seleucids.

How was it possible that in the fourth century Christians in Antioch became fascinated with the tradition of the martyrdom of the Maccabean brothers, even to the extent of venerating them in large numbers in a shrine in the city's predominantly Jewish southern quarter? How did this location eventually get adopted by the Church?

This key question can only be answered in the context of the city's general religious situation at the time. Since the reign of Diocletian, Antioch, besides Constantinople, had been the most important administrative center in the Late Eastern Roman Empire (and thus the seat of the praetorian prefect of the *dioecesis Oriens* as well as of other imperial political and military authorities). In the fourth century, it experienced both an extraordinary economic boom and, doubtless, a significant increase in population. A wide range of religious groups flourished in this communicative juncture near the Roman Empire's eastern border, a location characterized by polyethnicity and high social mobility. In the 320's, the notorious Antiochian schism broke out, which split the local Church first into two, then into three groups (alongside many smaller "sects") that struggled for the control of the Christian infrastructure with alternating success. This schism subsequently damaged the Church's public image and paralyzed its authority and influence in the city; the schism would only be overcome in 414/15 C.E.²⁴ One of its effects was that non-Christian communities,

Art and Archaeology in Honor of G. Foerster, ed. Leonard V. Rutgers, vol. 1, *Interdisciplinary Studies in Ancient Culture and Religion* (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 305–333, esp. 325–329. on third century readings and textual selection during the prayer service. Antioch's ecclesiastical space offers Rouwhorst important material for his findings.

²⁴ Manlio Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel iv secolo* (Roma: Istituto Patristico Augustinianum, 1975), 360–373; Hanns Christof Brennecke, *Studien zur Geschichte der Homöer. Der Osten bis zum Ende der homöischen Reichskirche*, vol. 73, *Beiträge zur historischen Theologie* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1988), esp. 66–81. 232ff.; Franz Dünzl, "Die Absetzung des Bischofs Meletius von Antiochien 361 n. C.," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 43 (2000): 71–93.

too, were able to obtain a considerable public profile or strongly assert their religious identities. However, this was less the case for paganism and its cults – these would experience a decline in the fourth century that even the emperor Julian's (361–363 C.E.) efforts at restoration could not reverse – than for Judaism. Despite the policies of Christianization promoted by the Late Roman state, Antioch's Jewry could now distinguish itself on the local religious market place and exert considerable appeal.

This fact has long remained unrecognized, because its most important documentation – a series of eight Sunday sermons (now misleadingly known as the *Adversus Iudaeos*) on the occasion of the forthcoming cycle of Jewish high holidays, delivered by John Chrysostom against Judaizing Christians in the late summer and autumn of 386 or 387 C.E., when he was a young deacon in the Syrian city – has long been understood as clear-cut proof of the Christian community's disassociation from the Jews.²⁵ The sermons undoubtedly articulate an open, sometimes agitated, and in certain instances hate-filled rejection of Jewish festivals and practices, thus attesting to a vehement, even aggressive rejection of Jewish communal life by Antioch's Christian clergy. But at the same time the preacher's admonitions, insults and warnings regarding participation in the Jewish holidays attest a vivid Christian-Jewish coexistence in Antioch going far beyond peaceful neighborliness.²⁶ Many Christians had, in fact, lost awareness of the basic dissimilitude of both the Jewish and Christian faiths and the symbolic dimension of each religion's practices. Judaizing tendencies had emerged in the majority of Antioch's Christian populace, challenging the Church's identity and doctrine.²⁷ What needs to be stressed here is that this "Judaizing" was not limited to aspects of direct religious practice such as participating in Chanukah or the Rosh Hashanah (i.e. the New Year's festival), but pervaded many areas of life. Christians preferred to affirm business relations through oath-taking in the

²⁵ See Hahn, *Die jüdische Gemeinde im spätantiken Antiochia*; *idem*, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt*, 143–145.

²⁶ On peaceful coexistence between pagans and Christians in Antioch, see *ibid.*, 121, 130ff.

²⁷ Homil. 1, 1 adv. Jud. (PG 48, col. 844f.); *ibid.* 3, 5 (PG 48, col. 869); *ibid.* 6, 6 (PG 48, col. 913); *ibid.* 8, 4 (PG 48, col. 933f.); Homil. 1, 7 in Galat. (PG 61, col. 623). See also esp. Homil. 3 adv. Jud., dedicated to the controversial Easter date; on the background see Wolfgang Huber, *Passa und Ostern. Untersuchungen zur Osterfeier der alten Kirche*, vol. 35, Beihefte der Zeitschrift für Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969), 61–69.

synagogue, a location considered more effective than other venues. In cases of illness, they called on Jewish doctors or used magical potions and amulets manufactured by Jews. Incubation, namely, the process of staying overnight for the sake of healing, before the Torah arc in the synagogue at Daphne, Antioch's famous summer resort, was a common practice among both Christians and Jews.²⁸

In this manner, the general religious and social institutions and practices of the city's Jewry exerted an enormous appeal for Antioch's Christians. From the perspective of the local church hierarchy, this had become an unmistakable threat to the inner cohesion and identity of the Christian community. As Chrysostom indicates, not only did Christians prefer Jewish feasts and fasts, but they also had themselves circumcised according to Jewish rite.²⁹ It is obvious that in such a context of urban everyday life, in which the majority of the Christian population would closely interact with their Jewish neighbors despite the eloquent attacks of the young cleric, the cult of the Maccabean brothers would have been encountered and would have sparked great interest. Their veneration would have spread among Antioch's Christians along with the respect for, and soon enough, cultic interest and participation in, the religious customs of their Jewish "brothers in faith". After all, the martyrs had emerged from the glorious history of their shared home-city Antioch!

It is highly probable that the popular veneration of the Maccabean brothers by local Christians has initially been met with deep mistrust and vehement rejection on the part of Antioch's clergy. However,

²⁸ Oath taking in the synagogue: Homil. 1, 3 adv. Jud. (PG 48, col. 847f.); help from Jewish doctors and Jewish magic: Homil. 8, 6f. adv. Jud. (PG 48, col. 936f.); incubation in the Daphne synagogue: Homil. 1, 6 adv. Jud. (PG 48, col. 852). On the great influence of Jewish magic see Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews*, 83ff., with the discussion of a third or fourth century Jewish handbook of magic (*ibid.*, 85f.) and Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel. A Study of the Relations Between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire (135–425)* (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1986), 339ff.; Peter Schäfer, "Jewish Magical Literature in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 41 (1990): 75–91.

²⁹ Attendance of Jewish festivals: Homil. 1, 1 adv. Jud. (PG 48, col. 844), *passim*; participation in Jewish fasting: Homil. 1, 4 adv. Jud. (PG 48, col. 849). *passim*; circumcision: *ibid.*, 2, 2 (PG 48, col. 858f.); *ibid.*, 8, 5 (PG 48, col. 935). On the phenomenon of "Judaizing" see the concise article by Vincent Déroche, "Judaïzantes," in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 2001), 19: 130–142, esp. 137ff. (with literature).

there is no extant evidence of such a reaction.³⁰ The Maccabean cult and shrine in Antioch seem to have been neutralized through appropriation and theological reinterpretation like other practices in their religious environs alien to the Christian tradition, in particular paganism. There is no doubt that the Church's appropriation of the martyrs' graves in the fourth century marked a sharp and much-observed caesura in Antioch's history.

Unfortunately it is entirely unclear when and how control of the shrine was transferred from the Jews to the local Church. The earliest definite documentation of Christian possession of the site can be found in a number of sermons by Chrysostom for the annual festival of the martyrs, being delivered at some point between 386 and 398 C.E.³¹ In 391 C.E. or later, Augustine speaks of the Christian basilica of the Maccabees, but neither he nor later authors provide any chronological information.³² Since no documentation exists for the restitution of the site to its previous Jewish owners during the reign of Julian the Apostate and since indications of multiple changes of ownership are also lacking, an earlier Christian appropriation of the graves is unlikely.

Independent of these ultimately irresolvable questions, it has to be noted that in the late fourth century, the religious situation in Antioch was characterized by an extraordinary attraction to Judaism shared by many Christians. The Christian clergy reacted to this perceived threat

³⁰ But for individual critical positions and statements regarding the veneration of the Maccabees outside of Antioch in Late Antiquity see Ziadé, *Les martyrs Maccabées*, 154ff.

³¹ On these sermons – together with the corresponding position of Gregory of Nazianzus – see Ziadé, *Les martyrs Maccabées*. On questions of dating, *ibid.*, 55–61.

³² Joh. Chrys., Homil. 1–3 de Maccabeis (PG 50, col. 617–628), esp. 1,1 (col. 617). Augustin., Sermon. 300, 6 (PL 38, col. 1379). Further sources in Schatkin, “The Maccabean Martyrs,” 104. The predominant hypothesis that the change was instituted under Valens (364–378) or owing to the efforts of bishop Flavian (381–404) is scholarly speculation, see Marcel Simon, “La polémique anti-juive de Saint Jean Chrysostome et le mouvement judaïsant d’Antioche,” *Annuaire de l’Institut de Philologie et d’Histoire Orientales* 4 (1936): 403–421 (= *Mélanges F. Cumont*), 414: “peut-être sous l’empereur arien Valens, peut-être sous le patriarcat de Flavian”; Rampolla, *Martyre et sépulture des Macchabées*, 387; cf. Pierre Maraval, *Lieux saints et pèlerinages d’Orient. Histoire et géographie. Des origines à la conquête arabe* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1985), 341 note 96. On the question of whether burial places and sites of veneration of the Maccabees were located in a synagogue or connected with a synagogue in any way, see my short discussion (rejecting the possibility) in Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt*, 182–184. On this question in detail most recently Triebel, *Die angebliche Synagoge der makabäischen Märtyrer*; see above, n. 9.

with regular, albeit not very successful, delimiting efforts and the formulation of a more pronounced Christian identity. Only a few decades later, such efforts, with the help of state institutions and increasingly strict anti-Jewish legislation, would aim at the repression of the flourishing, respected, and influential Antiochian Jewry and its public practice of religion. This process would culminate in the destruction of local synagogues and the far-reaching social marginalization of a community whose religion was still officially considered *licita*.³³ The appropriation of the Maccabean graves under unknown circumstances could have represented a first step in this marginalization and could have involved illegal acts and/or the use of violence. In any case, it occurred in a situation of vivid religious competition in Antioch and involved the Jews' removal from a locus of veneration that had been their very own. We may consider the Church's acceptance and subsequent propagation of the veneration as both a religious innovation and, retrospectively, a seminal and astonishingly successful Christian usurpation of a non-Christian martyr cult. It did not take place out of free will, but rather as a consequence of the popular Christian veneration of the Maccabean brothers and, as indicated, as an organized ecclesiastical reaction to a massive threat of increasing "Judaization" of Christian believers through an eminently successful fourth century eastern Jewry.³⁴

But we need to take note of additional specific conditions of the religious situation in Antioch that contributed to what still may, on the face of it, seem like a surprising development. Reviewing the history of the local Church in the fourth century, it becomes clear that the identity of Christians in the Syrian metropolis was closely tied to the

³³ Klaus Dieter Reichardt, "Die Judengesetzgebung im Codex Theodosianus," *Kairos* 20 (1978): 16–39, 19ff., 28ff.; Alfredo Mordechai Rabello, "The Legal Condition of the Jews in the Roman Empire," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt II* 13 (1980), 662–762, 695ff.; *The Jews in the Roman Imperial Legislation*, ed. Amnon Linder (Detroit/Mich.-Jerusalem: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 78–86 and *passim*.

³⁴ In this respect, concerning various late antique cities in the east, see Angelos Chaniotis, "The Jews of Aphrodisias: New Evidence and Old Problems," *Scripta Classica Israelica* 21 (2002): 209–242; *idem*, "Zwischen Konfrontation und Interaktion: Christen, Juden und Heiden im spätantiken Aphrodisias," in *Patchwork. Dimensionen multikultureller Gesellschaften*, ed. Andreas Ackermann and Klaus E. Müller (Bielefeld: transcript-verlag, 2002), 83–127; John S. Crawford, "Jews, Christians, and Polytheists in Late-Antique Sardis," in *Jews, Christians, and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue*, ed. Steven Fine (London-New York: Routledge, 1999), 190–200; and in general Igino Grego, *La reazione ai Giudeo-Cristiani nel IV secolo* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1976); Déroche, "Iudaizantes," *passim*.

experience of persecution and martyrdom. Christian tradition – and not only that of the metropolis itself – attributes a substantial series of martyrdoms to Antioch, starting with that of the eminent bishop Ignatius, said to have already taken place in 116 C.E.³⁵ Antioch's bishop, Cyril (ca. 279/80–303 C.E.), himself fell victim to Diocletian's persecution of Christians in the city; but we do not have a clear picture of the extent of the persecutions there.³⁶ In any case, the enforcement of the anti-Christian edicts in the city seems to have been personally directed or at least sometimes supervised by the Emperor Galerius, the notorious persecutor of Christians.³⁷

However, for Antioch's Christians, this historical experience would remain omnipresent in a manner outreaching the persecutory trauma fundamental for the identity of the Late Antique Church in the Imperium Romanum in general. To understand this, we need to first of all consider the unusual physical circumstances in which the community's life unfolded: despite the extraordinary upsurge of Christianity within the city and although the majority of the population of Antioch had already converted to Christianity by Julian's reign, the local Church's infrastructure did not keep up with this powerful demographic trend. Only two churches had been available for prayer services until the end of the fourth century. As a result, most services had to be held in the numerous martyrs' chapels outside the city walls. John Chrysostom thus regularly preached in the *martyria* located in the *suburbium*, as had been the case in the time of persecution. These localities, together with the *memoria* and spiritual identity preserved there (and repeatedly mentioned in Chrysostom's

³⁵ For an overview see the article by Johannes Kollwitz, "Antiochia am Orontes," in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1950), 1: 461–469, here 465ff.; Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les origines du culte des martyrs*, vol. 20, *Subsidia Hagiographica* (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1933), 192ff.

³⁶ According to Eusebius one of the presbyters, Lucius, became a victim of the persecution. The church historian also emphasizes the martyrdom of two pairs of sisters and reports elsewhere in more detail – undoubtedly on the basis of documents from his own church, which, for example, contained two precise dates (17/20 November 303) on the course of the martyrdom and a reference to the presence of "the emperor" (i.e. Galerius) – on the fate of the deacon Romanus of Caesarea, who, finding himself in Antioch by coincidence, had to die there at the outbreak of the persecution. Euseb., *Hist. Eccl.* 8.12.2ff. and 13.1; *Mart. Pal.* 2. However, Eusebius did not possess the information necessary for a detailed report on the events in Antioch; and the other extant sources do not allow the reconstruction of systematic actions against the local Christian population.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

sermons), represented important reference points for both the community's everyday life and its religious awareness.³⁸

But even after the Constantinian epochal turn, concrete experiences of persecution would define the churchly existence of Antioch's Christians for many decades. The Antiochian schism not only split the local Church into Arians and Nicaeans, but also split, for generations, the latter group into two large bitterly feuding discipleships of competing bishops. Throughout the schism's course, various congregations were repeatedly driven out, sometimes violently, from the city's churches and *martyria* in alternating constellations. The victims often had to assemble illegally for years, frequently under the open sky on the bank of the Orontes. They were also frequently threatened by soldiers, mobilized – with help from the imperial apparatus within the city – by the bishop whose creed was currently being recognized by the state. These forces were sent against both the dissenting Christians and fellow clerics who stubbornly refused to grant him communion.³⁹ In this manner, over many years in varying degrees of intensity, the adherence to one's own sense of faith in the face of continual threat and violence and the consciousness of oppression by empire and emperor remained fixed elements of Christian existence in Antioch.

But *martyria* and martyrs would also play a prominent role in the competition with paganism, the religious force still dominating the city's public life. The nephew of Emperor Constantius, Gallus (351–354 C.E.), made himself a name as an enthusiastic promoter of Christianity.⁴⁰ He thus set himself the goal of “freeing” the city's cultic

³⁸ Johannes Chrysostomos Baur, *Der heilige Johannes Chrysostomus und seine Zeit I–II* (Munich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1929/30), 24–27 and 164f. with both a compilation of the material and the days of the church year on which prayer services were held in honour of these martyrs and their martyrdom. See also Walther Eltester, “Die Kirchen Antiochias im IV. Jh.,” *Zeitschrift für Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 36 (1937): 251–286, here 271f. 278ff. and Maraval, *Lieux saints et pèlerinages d'Orient*, 337–342. On the situation regarding the church-building infrastructure in the fourth century see Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt*, 148–151 (with literature); for the sixth century onward see Hugh N. Kennedy, “Antioch: from Byzantium to Islam and Back Again,” in *The City in Late Antiquity*, ed. John Rich (London: Routledge, 1992), 181–198, here 185ff.

³⁹ On this aspect, with sources and additional literature, see Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt*, 157–160.

⁴⁰ Gallus cultivated close contacts with the city's leading clerics and personally intervened in the Arian controversy in Antioch; Sozom., *Hist. Eccl.* 3,15; cf. Philostorg., *Hist. Eccl.* 3,15ff., esp. 27f. In this regard see Downey, *A History of Antioch*, 363; Brennecke, *Studien zur Geschichte der Homöer*, 137f.

center in Daphne with its famous temple of Apollo and other such sanctuaries “from pagan superstition.”⁴¹ To this end, Gallus transferred the bones of the martyred Antiochian bishop Babylas, buried in the cemetery at the Daphnean Gate, to a specially built chapel in the Apollonian temple area near the Castalian Spring.⁴²

This breathtaking procedure, namely, the erection of a *martyrion* in the *temenos* of the temple of Apollo, did not have any previous or contemporary parallel. It signified an unheard of violation of the holy area of Daphne and an unprecedented attack on the city’s pagan infrastructure. More significantly, in its exorcist intention – the famous prophetic force of the Castalian Spring was reported to have disappeared immediately – it was a stunning innovation. It was, in essence, a spiritual purification and aggressive sacral appropriation of a pagan cultic space. The Church created a henceforth Christian locus of veneration. In Antioch as elsewhere, Babylas had until then been an obscure and practically forgotten martyr; his “history” still needed to be shaped and written. Soon he would emerge as an important element of the Antiochian Church’s festival calendar.⁴³ The transfer of this martyr’s relics to a new place of veneration for spiritual reasons, as practiced by Gallus in Antioch, represented the first identifiable such translation and marked the structural inception of a lively trade in relics. It constituted an auspicious new instrument for establishing sacral Christian spaces as would soon become demonstrated in other locations. It indicated, above all, that with its increased self-confidence, the Church no longer hesitated to take over and sacrally reinterpret a competing cult in order to strengthen the Christian community and its public spiritual

⁴¹ Sozom., H.E. 5.19.12. Cf. Joh. Chrys., De S. Babyla c. Iulian. 76ff. (XIV) (PG 50, col. 554).

⁴² The chief source here is Amm. 14.1.1ff. Joh. Chrys., De S. Babyla c. Iulian. 67ff. (XII) (PG 50, col. 551ff.); Sozom., Hist. Eccl. 5.19.12f. In Joh. Chrys., De S. hieromart. Babyla 8 (III) (PG 50, col. 532) the structure is expressly described as a *martyrium*. As a result of the legendary tradition, the historical role of bishop Babylas and the precise circumstances of his martyrdom have been distorted beyond recognition. See Margaret A. Schatkin, *Saint John Chrysostom Apologist*, vol. 73, Fathers of the Church (Washington/D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1984), 46ff. and the discussion, 15f. in Margaret A. Schatkin’s edition of *De Babyla contra Iulianum et gentiles*, vol. 362, Sources Chrétiennes (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1990).

⁴³ The church (not so much a *martyrium*) begun on the right bank of the Orontes in 379/380 C.E. would then be dedicated to the martyr Babylas; it is the only antique sacral structure in Antioch that has been verified through the American excavations (the dated mosaic inscription is now on display in the foyer of Princeton University Museum); see the summary in Downey, *A History of Antioch*, 415ff.

identity, and to promote Christianization. With its many lines of conflict, religious competition in Antioch prepared the groundwork for such remarkable sacral innovations and usurpations. In the following years and decades their exemplary character and practicability would often become apparent in the cities outside of the Syrian metropolis where those conflicts would be monitored and made public.

All of the so far analyzed developments in the religious life of Antioch – aptly characterized as a “religious market place” – unexpectedly culminated in the conflicts and altercations between pagans, Christians, and Jews under the rule of Julian, who tried to realize his religio-political program of restoring paganism during a seven month stay in Antioch. Much suggests that his actions in the metropolis played a decisive role for the fate of the Maccabean graves and, most importantly, for the reception of the martyrs’ veneration in Late Antique Christianity. Julian the “Apostate,” whose efforts at reviving the pagan cult and marginalizing the Christian faith were, in retrospective, hardly more than a historical episode without any consequences, was perceived as a deadly danger by the Late Antique Church far beyond the fourth century. Partly demonized in the Late tradition as an incarnation of the Antichrist, contemporary representatives of the Church considered Julian to be a relentless persecutor of Christians, a second Antiochus who personally undertook the process of seducing or forcing Christians to relinquish their faith, one by one.

In this context it is irrelevant, whether or not this perspective does justice to Julian’s program: he was well aware of the propagandistic impact of martyrdom and tried to avoid it at all costs.⁴⁴ This is evident in the emperor’s most spectacular confrontation with the Antiochian Christians, the restoration of the Apollo cult and Daphne’s Castalian Spring through purification of the *temenos*, an act that resulted from his taking the moderate measure of allowing the Christian community to return the relics of Babylas to their old location in the cemetery outside of the city rather than simply having them destroyed. This new translation of relics was staged by the Antiochian Church as a triumphant procession with countless participants. And yet, at the same

⁴⁴ Julian., *Misop.* 361A; *idem*, *Ep.* 60 (Bidez; 380A–B). Cf. Sozom., *Hist. Eccl.* 5.4.6f. and 5.11.12.

time, it was staged as a protest march against the emperor, with psalms being chanted against both him and pagan idol worship.⁴⁵

The main contribution of the hagiographic tradition in this respect was to highlight the regime of the pagan emperor and his persecutory raging in numerous accounts of martyrdom, with Antioch as the staging ground. Several of the participants in the triumphal return of the relics, members of the clergy and simple believers, but also soldiers close to the emperor, were said to have later fallen victim to his fury and become martyrs. However, it is revealing that the majority of the hagiographic texts can only present confessors but not martyrs, i.e. individuals actually killed in the putative persecutions. Upon closer scrutiny, the historical substance of the seemingly impressive density of contemporary reports and later traditions turns out to be strikingly thin and problematic.⁴⁶ Contrary to the description of Christian chroniclers, the Antiochian Christians in fact experienced no persecution under Julian.⁴⁷ But the Christian view that the emperor began his exterminatory campaign against Christianity in Antioch and that thousands of Antiochian Christians became martyrs, was directly taken up by the Late Antique Church and became an immovable cornerstone in its historical self-understanding.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ For a detailed description of the procession see Joh. Chrys., *De S. Babyla c. Julian.* 90 (XVI) (PG 50, col. 558); Sozom., *Hist. Eccl.* 4.19.18f. and Artemii *passio* 55 (p. 233, Kotter = GCS Philostorgius, p. 92, Bidez and Hansen). The ceremonial transfer of the Babylas relics is said to have even brought hostile camps in Antioch's church together in shared resistance to the pagan emperor (see Sozom., *Hist. Eccl.* 6.4).

⁴⁶ See the detailed analysis of these cases in Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt*, 173–177. The explanation offered by the church historian Theodoret (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.17.8) for the absence of consummated martyrdom under Julian is illuminating here: he perceives the emperor's particular infamy in the trial against a group of Christian soldiers to lie in his robbing them of a well-earned and longed for martyrdom by pardoning them under the gallows. Similarly already in Greg. Naz., *Or.* 4 (c. Julian.), 83f.

⁴⁷ Nevertheless this idea has been presented in the scholarly literature unremittingly and in an uncritical succession of Christian propaganda; see, e.g., Downey, *A History of Antioch*, 397; José Miguel Alonso-Nuñez, "The Emperor Julian's Misopogon and the Conflict between Christianity and Paganism," *Ancient Society* 10 (1979): 311–324. On the complex of problems pertaining to the image of Julian as persecutor of Christians and to the martyrdoms attributed to him see also (with reservations) Brennecke, *Studien zur Geschichte der Homöer*, 114ff. (with a discussion of many putative martyrdoms under Julian generated within the Homoean tradition) 152ff., and Robert J. Penella, "Julian the Persecutor in Fifth Century Church Historians," *Ancient World* 24 (1993): 31–43.

⁴⁸ See among other works, from the Antiochian perspective, Joh. Chrys., *De S. hieromart. Babyla* 3 (II) (p. 298 Z. 17ff., Grillet and Guinot = PG 50, col. 530): "But

From the contemporary Christian perspective, Julian's policies of oppression of the Church and deliberate polarization of religious relationships in the cities for the sake of marginalizing Christianity, were by no means limited to promoting Christian-pagan conflict alone. Rather, Church representatives found Julian's promotion of Judaism a far more grave and threatening matter; here once again, Antioch turns out to be the focal point of the debate, with the veneration of the Macabees thus being in the crosshairs of the later Christian reaction.

The one thing, however, that was perceived as the greatest possible threat to Christian identity was Julian's project – announced in Antioch and pursued from there with great energy – to restore the Jerusalem Temple, which had been lying in ruins since 70 C.E. and which had been inaccessible to Jews since the end of the Bar Kochba Revolt in 135 C.E. The emperor's plan to transfer Israel and Jerusalem – the first loci associated with the life of Jesus and his revelation, and only recently, from Constantinian times on, won and developed as Holy Land – to the Jews for settlement and appropriation could only have been interpreted as the apostate's effort to deal Christianity a mortal blow.⁴⁹ After all, the core of his undertaking was an attempt to rebuild the same Jewish Temple in Jerusalem that Jesus had declared was gone forever. The Church understood the destruction of the Temple by Titus in 70 C.E. as bearing witness to God's judgment against the Jews for the murder of the Lord and as demonstrating the replacement

he announced the intention of tearing the Galilean people [= the Christians] out from the center of the world."

⁴⁹ For this Christian perception, it is characteristic and paradigmatic that concerning Julian's government John Chrysostom simply declares the following: "Julian was the first to try to rebuild... the temple in Jerusalem. He, the pagan, took up the interests of the Jews, in order to break the power of Christ"; Joh. Chrys. Homil. de s. Bab. 22 (PG 50, col. 568). From a Christian viewpoint the clearly dominant Julianic motives for the rebuilding of the temple, namely the integration of the Jewish God into the pantheon and hierarchy of the empire's pagan divinities – with the God of the Jews, equated by the emperor with the highest and mightiest god of creation, implicitly being addressed as one manifestation of a supreme imperial god –, were irrelevant. See the superb analysis of Hans Lewy, "Emperor Julian and the Building of the Temple", *Zion* 6 (1940/41): 1–32 (Hebr.) = *The Jerusalem Cathedra* 3 (1983): 70–96. On the historical premises, contemporary conditions, and within a short time spectacularly failed efforts to realize Julian's plan to reestablish the temple of Jerusalem as the central sanctuary of contemporary Jewry, see in detail Johannes Hahn, "Kaiser Julian und ein dritter Tempel? Idee, Wirklichkeit, Wirkung eines gescheiterten Projekts," in *Der Jerusalemer Tempel und seine Zerstörungen*, ed. Johannes Hahn, vol. 147, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 237–262.

of the Old Covenant by the New, hence the transfer of Israel's state of chosenness to the Church itself.

It is unclear whether Julian's plans for Jerusalem were formulated at his own initiative or whether they were due in large part to the encouragement of the local Jewish community.⁵⁰ Both accounts are offered in the Christian sources and in both cases intensive communication is said to have taken place.⁵¹ We need to bear in mind that the accounts were aimed at giving vivid expression to the purported imperial and Jewish hatred of Christians; their historical basis is thoroughly questionable. From a certain point in time, the involvement of Jews is indisputable, starting, at the latest, with Julian's long stay in Antioch, site of the most important Diaspora Jewish community in the empire's eastern half. There is evidence that during this period the emperor established contact with the community's representatives.⁵² The question of the first initiative, however, has to remain unanswered.

The imperial Church regarded the emperor's Jerusalem project as a deadly menace, born out of Julian's hatred against Christianity. It was precisely in Antioch and its Syrian hinterland where Julian's project was able to exert a powerful impact, as the theological persuasiveness of many Jewish ideas – not merely the attractiveness of Jewish festivals and social practices – was penetrating deeply into Christian circles there. We thus find an ecclesiastical directive whose extant version,

⁵⁰ See in greater detail *ibid.*, 245–248.

⁵¹ Thus already Joh. Chrys. Homil. 5.11 adv. Jud. (PG 48, 900), Homil. de s. Bab. 22 (PG 50, 567) and subsequently in the church historical tradition: Socr. Hist. Eccl. 3, 20; Soz. Hist. Eccl. 5, 22. See Francois Blanchetière, "Julien philhellène, philosémite, antichrétien: L'affaire du Temple de Jerusalem (363)," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 31 (1980): 61–81, and David B. Levenson, "Julian's Attempt to Rebuild the Temple. An Inventory of Ancient and Medieval Sources," in *Of Scribes and Scrolls*, ed. Harold W. Attridge (Lanham-New York-London: University Press of America, 1990), 261–279. An early sixth century strongly anti-Jewish, novelistic Julian-narrative of (Christian) Syrian provenance (perhaps from the city of Edessa) offers a detailed account of the discussions and negotiations between the emperor and Jewish representatives concerning the Temple's rebuilding. See *Julianos der Abtrünnige. Syrische Erzählungen*, ed. Johann Georg Ernst Hoffmann (Leiden: Brill, 1880), 108–116; *Julian the Apostate, Now Translated for the First Time from the Syriac Original*, ed. Hermann Gollancz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1928), 117ff. For an eloquent précis, see Michael Adler, "The Emperor Julian and the Jews," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 5 (1893): 591–651 = *Der Kaiser Julian und die Juden*, in *Julian Apostata*, ed. Richard Klein, vol. 509, *Wege der Forschung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1978), 48–111, here 66ff.

⁵² On Antioch as a center of the Jewish Diaspora see Meeks and Wilken, *Jews and Christians in Antioch*; Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews*, 34–59, and Hahn, *Die jüdische Gemeinde im spätantiken Antiochia, passim*.

transmitted in Syriac, can be assigned to the fourth century.⁵³ This version not only reveals a remarkably friendly attitude towards Judaism when it appeals for Jews being designated as brothers,⁵⁴ but also calls on Christians to mourn with these brothers for the Temple's destruction and to fast together with them. Jews and Judaizing Christians together looked forward eagerly to the arrival of the time in which they could enter Jerusalem and reinitiate the sacrificial service, a time when Jews would no longer convert to Christianity but Christians would become Jews.⁵⁵ In such circles, the destroyed Temple was not regarded as an argument for or demonstration of exclusively Christian salvational certainty but, on the contrary, as the symbol of an enduring, inseparable tie of the two religious groups. Knowledge of such Judaizing streams and the way they were affecting even the fixed pillars of Christian salvational truth (and various local Christian communities) explains the strikingly aggressive, indeed hate-filled, reaction of Christian authors – especially from the Syrian-Mesopotamian realm – to the Jerusalem project's initiator.

Julian's stay in Antioch and his religious policies had an impact on both Christian-Jewish relations in the city and, even more importantly, the Christian clergy's approach to local Jewry that can only be considered remarkable. The extraordinary attractiveness of Jewish communal life, the friendly and even intimate contacts between Jewish and Christian believers, and the shared convictions and practices, must have driven the city's Church – numerically strong yet multipally divided and thus weakened – into a situation that was perceived as a struggle to preserve not only its own identity but also the community's cohesion and existence. The popular veneration of the Maccabean martyrs,

⁵³ On the complex questions regarding the tradition and dating of the directive, usually designated a Syrian didaschalia, see the article by Bruno Steimer, "Didaschalia," in *Lexikon der antiken christlichen Literatur*, ed. Siegmar Döpp and Wilhelm Geerlings (Freiburg-Basel-Vienna: Herder, 1999), 167f.; on the text and its relevant information see A. Peter Hayman, *The Disputation of Sergius the Stylite against a Jew* (Leuven: Peeters, 1973), 425f. in more detail.

⁵⁴ Similarly moderate, if not friendly statements about contemporary Jews can be found in texts of Aphrahat written between 337 und 344/5 A.D.; see *ibid.*, 426f.; Jacob Neusner, *Aphrahat and Judaism: The Christian-Jewish Argument in Fourth-Century Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 1971).

⁵⁵ Hieron., Comm. in Jes. 35.10 (CCL 73, 427); cf. Hieron., Comm. in Zach. 14.10f. (CCL 76a, 885) and in this regard Fergus Millar, "The Jews of the Graeco-Roman Diaspora between Paganism and Christianity, A.D. 312–438," in *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire*, ed. Judith Lieu, John North and Tessa Rajak (London: Routledge, 1992), 97–123, here 113f.

that cut across the boundaries between the different religious groups, and both the spiritual force and the intra-urban cohesive potential tied to the shrine, denoted only one out of many arenas for an open religious competition in which Antioch's Church appeared to face defeat even before the period of Julian's government. The successful resistance of the Antiochians in general and the city's Christians in particular to Julian's presence and political program offered the local Church a sudden chance of gaining enormous public prestige. It also afforded them the opportunity to obtain increased self-confidence and, with the "victims" of the Julianic "persecutions" as new martyrs, new instruments of propaganda in their conflict with intra-urban opponents and religious competitors: the Jews being the most prominent among the latter.

An appropriation of the Maccabean gravesite by Antioch's Church is highly probable to have taken place immediately following the abrupt end of Julian's rule. Unfortunately, there are no extant sources offering information, with regard to the veneration of the Maccabean brothers, about the ramifications of either the failure of Julian's restoration within the city or the death of the young emperor soon afterwards. Although we know about the emperor's attitudes towards the Jerusalem Temple, we have no idea in what manner Julian approached the Jewish site of veneration during his stay in Antioch. With the emperor seizing every opportunity to weaken the Church that arose, the shrine's huge popularity among Christians as well as Jews should have translated into imperial support. But this is uncertain. The Christianization of the site immediately following the death of the apostate – thereby exploiting the once again favorable religio-political power balance – would not be surprising. It would have to be understood as an expression of the Antiochian Church's newfound self-confidence vis-à-vis local Jewish competition, whose own hopes, under Julian, had only just been shattered in a spectacular manner.

As a matter of fact, there are a number of indirect suggestions that warrant such a conclusion. At the same time in nearby Asia Minor, Gregory of Nazianzus, in his sermon "On the Maccabees," propagated a direct connection with the Jewish martyrs,⁵⁶ placing them in

⁵⁶ Martha Vinson, "Gregory Nazianzen's Homily 15 and the Genesis of the Christian Cult of the Maccabean Martyrs," *Byzantion* 64 (1994): 166–192, here 166f., with a discussion of the dating of the sermon (Homil. 15).

the context of the ongoing religious conflict. The Maccabean brothers are addressed as exemplary opponents of a pagan ruler, as a Christian symbol of resistance to a devious and godless tyrant who wanted to force *hellenismós* – the key concept of the Julian restoration – on unbending martyrs for faith. In this context, Gregory establishes a link to the Temple's destruction and offers the first explicit reference to a Christian feast (*panégyris*) of the Maccabees.⁵⁷ Whether this could also be understood as a reference to a recent takeover of the Maccabean shrine by Antioch's Church is more than questionable, for the preacher would have mentioned such a fundamental religious upheaval if it had taken place.

Immediately following its usurpation by the Church, the erection of a basilica on the Jewish site of veneration and pilgrimage signaled its irrevocable occupation and exclusive veneration by Christians.⁵⁸ The procedure is reminiscent of that of Gallus in Daphne shortly after the mid-century. Gallus had undertaken an offensive appropriation of the chief sacred pagan locus in Antioch – moreover, through an exorcistic translation of relics – and thus replaced the most important rival cult of Christian religion by a new Christian site of veneration – this unfolding in a climate of mutual religious tolerance. Through this new usurpation, the local Church, standing in intense religious competition with Judaism, once again took hold of what was presumably the most influential Jewish cultic site in the city. A growing number of Christian pilgrims prayed shoulder to shoulder with Jewish and pagan worshippers and seekers of help at the site which was considered to be a locus of miracle-working.

The Christian usurpation of the Maccabean shrine was no less innovative than the translation of the relics a decade or two earlier. In the Mediterranean world, in the years and centuries that followed, various cure-promising sites of incubation with pagan origins would be

⁵⁷ The more detailed discussion of Vinson, Gregory Nazianzen's Homily 15.187 is hardly tenable (the silence of the Roman chronograph of 354 regarding the veneration of the Maccabees is irrelevant). To backdate the Christian veneration of the Maccabees to the time of Julian would be mere speculation. On the festival see Ziadé, *Les martyrs Maccabées*, 63f.

⁵⁸ Augustine's scant remarks in Sermo 300.6 (PL 38, col. 1379), *haec basilica a Christianis tenetur, a Christianis aedificata est*, suggest that the building of the church followed the appropriation of the site immediately or very soon after. His remarks also exclude the idea of a Christian appropriation and transformation of a synagogue, as asserted in the Arabic topographic tradition and by some scholars.

appropriated in a similar way and rededicated to Christian saints.⁵⁹ The fact of such Christian appropriation, whether carried out peacefully, through compulsion, or open force, needs to be understood as a consequence of the intensive everyday contacts between ordinary Jews and Christians in fourth century Antioch. This process – “Judaization” – of cultural and religious engagement between Jews and Christians was perceived as a threat by the Church hierarchy.

The rapid, sustained expansion of the veneration of the Maccabean martyrs in the imperial Church starting at the end of the fourth century – a process expediated by the installation of various cultic sites and churches dedicated to the Maccabees in other cities – exceeds and outstrips the above-analyzed local developments. A decisive precondition for the process was the flourishing cult of relics, in particular the innovative phenomenon of relic translation discussed above. This process now allowed Christians and Christian communities located elsewhere to share the beneficial and miraculous effects of the relics and experience the physical presence of the erstwhile Jewish martyrs. In this way, relics originating from Antioch were disseminated and made accessible throughout the important centers of Late Antique and Early Byzantine Christianity, a process that also promoted familiarity with and attraction toward the tradition, preserved in the Maccabean texts, of the exemplary, steadfast piety of the seven brothers and their mother, prepared for martyrdom in emulation of the venerable Eleazar.

A crucial legacy of the specifically local constellation of and debate about the Maccabean brothers needs to be mentioned here: the enormous valorization and actualization of the issue of martyrdom in fourth century Antioch, culminating in the confrontations with Julian. In post-Constantine Antioch, “martyrdoms,” like experiences of persecution in general, were not episodes from the past. The generation-long schisms within the city, but even more so the temporary presence of Julian and his emphatically pagan policies of restoration, led to Antioch’s Christians periodically experiencing illegality, state

⁵⁹ On the extremely well documented case of the incubation shrine of Isis in Menouthis (Egypt), see Sarolta A. Takács, “The Magic of Isis Replaced or: Cyril of Alexandria’s Attempt at Redirecting Religious Devotion,” *Poikila Byzantina* 13 (1994): 489–507 and Dominic Montserrat, “Pilgrimage to the Shrine of SS Cyrus and John at Menouthis in Late Antiquity,” in *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*, ed. David Frankfurter (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 257–279 (with additional parallels).

repression, and the exertion of physical force, not to mention open religious competition. In the environment of the Syrian metropolis, and on the basis of specific historical and religious conditions, the idea of martyrdom gained extraordinary new significance and relevance for the Church: first and foremost for the city of Antioch, but at the same time – by way of the confrontation with Julian – for the imperial Church altogether.

Julian was all too familiar with the explosive potential of the martyrdom question. However, he did not only fail symbolically in the conflict over the Babylas relics in Daphne, whose removal and return, as we will recall, culminated in a Christian triumphal procession that turned out to be a unique identity-generating measure for Antioch's Church. Rather, despite Julian's strenuous exertions to prevent the Church from gaining martyrs, what emerged – at least as propagated by the later tradition – amounted to a downright martyrization of the local Christian community. Long lists of reputed martyrs came to fill the martyrologies of both the Antiochian and Syrian churches. These martyrs and their *memoria* conveyed above all one message: in Antioch alone, the Christians' struggle for survival had unfolded eye to eye with the apostate. This, in turn, was the same basic message offered by the Maccabean tradition with regard to the Seleucid Antiochus, who, for his part, had been intent on Hellenizing the chosen people. Now, it was that second Antiochus, the apostate Julian, who meant to force the true people of God to worship idols. It is against this late fourth century historical backdrop that the Jewish Maccabean brothers would gain, by leaps and bounds, respect and veneration as true proto-martyrs of Christian faith. The fact that this would emerge from the Syrian metropolis of Antioch can hardly be surprising.

THE CULT OF THE MACCABEES IN THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Albrecht Berger

How, then, should we understand the Maccabees? Namely today is their holiday. True, they are not honored by many since their struggle did not take place after Christ, but they merit being honored by everyone because their steadfastness was for the sake of defending the ways of their fathers. Indeed, what would those who suffered their martyrdom before Christ's Passion have done had they been persecuted after Christ and had followed the example of His death for us? Would not those who had been so virtuous without the help of such an example proved even more noble facing danger after Christ's example?

An often-cited sermon by the church father Gregory of Nazianzus begins with these words,¹ which was probably written between 378 and 381, when Gregory was bishop of Constantinople.² The passage quite clearly shows that the Cult of the Holy Maccabees, that is, the cult of the seven brothers who had been martyred for their faith according to 2 and 4 Maccabees, had been newly introduced in that city and was not yet firmly established.

The cult of the Holy Maccabees had begun at the martyrs' grave in Antioch; in the later fourth century it spread over the Roman Empire,³ soon reaching Constantinople, as the sermon indicates. From Antioch itself, we have only a single reference to the cult in between the time John Chrysostom departed from the city in 398 to become Patriarch of Constantinople and a reference more than 150 years later. It stems from an anonymous pilgrim from Piacenza who passed through the city in 570 on the way to the Holy Land.

¹ Gregory of Nazianzus, "Oratio 15," in Migne, PG 35, col. 912A–933A. French in Raphaëlle Ziadé, *Les martyres Maccabées: De l'histoire juive au culte chrétien. Les homélies de Grégoire de Nazianze et de Jean Chrysostome*, vol. 80, Supplements to Vigiliæ Christianae (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 299–311.

² This new dating, according to Ziadé, *Les martyres Maccabées*, 136–154. The traditional dating of the sermon to the 360s appeared to demonstrate an early cult of the Maccabees in Kappadokien to which there are actually no references.

³ See Luigi Franco Pizzolato and Chiara Somenzi, *I sette fratelli Maccabei nella chiesa antica d'Occidente*, vol. 25, Studia Patristica Mediolanensia (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2005).

Throughout the decades previous to his pilgrimage, Antioch had experienced a strong decline. In 525 and 528 the city was destroyed by earthquakes and in 540 it was conquered and plundered by the Persians. The subsequent reconstruction was apparently carried out on a reduced scale.⁴ But it seems, to judge from the pilgrim's report, that the Maccabees' relics survived all these events. The report has been preserved in two versions. In one of these we read: "the Maccabee brothers, this means nine graves, and over each grave their torments hang", *pendent tormenta ipsorum*. The other version, referring to only seven graves, reads as follows: "...over every single grave their passion is depicted", *scripta sunt passiones illorum*. In the first case, the reference is to the graves of the seven brothers, their mother, and Eleazar; in the second case, there is only reference to the graves of the brothers.⁵

Soon after the visit of the pilgrim from Piacenza Antioch was again threatened by the Persians and the Maccabee relics were evacuated to the West. When and in what circumstances this move happened is uncertain: In 572 a war began between the Romans and Persians that lasted into 591; on several occasions the battles drew dangerously close to Antioch, which, however, was not actually attacked. In 609 the war broke out anew and the Persians eventually took the city, which they occupied between 614 and 628. Antioch then again came under Roman rule for ten years before falling in 638 to Islamic Arabs and soon losing its political significance.⁶

The only extant reference to the point in time when the Maccabee relics were moved is from an inscription now lost concerning their deposition in the church of St. Peter *ad Vincula* in Rome. The inscription, however, only dates to the eleventh or twelfth century.⁷ It points to the event as having taken place under a Pope Pelagius who, on account of the *terminus post quem* of 570, can only have been Pelagius II, who occupied St. Peter's throne between 579 and 590. Hence, at the time he took office, the Persian war had already been underway for some years.

⁴ Glanville Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest* (Princeton: University Press, 1961), 519–26, 533–53.

⁵ Antonini Placentini *Itinerarium*, in *Itineraria et alia geographica*, vol. 175, *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 1965), 1:127–153, chap. 47, 153 and 174.

⁶ Downey, *A History*, 560–78.

⁷ If a sermon transmitted under the name of Pope Leo I (440–461) entitled *In natali sanctorum septem fratrum Machabaeorum* is authentic, this took place over a century after the cult's introduction in Rome; see Margaret Schatkin, "The Maccabean Martyrs," *Vigiliae Christianae* 18 (1974): 97–113, 109.

Both temporally and spatially, the closest similar case of such a move is that of the relic of the Holy Cross from Apameia on the Orontes, located not far from Antioch; this relic was evacuated to Constantinople between 566 and 568, which is to say already before the start of the Persian war.⁸ Splinters were only taken from it there and subsequently sent to Rome and Francia as gifts.⁹ This seems to suggest that the Maccabean relics may themselves simply have been removed from the shrine in Antioch and then distributed in Constantinople, but we have no documentation to that effect.¹⁰ The deposition in the *ad Vincula* church of that portion of the relics sent to Rome may have been tied to its dedication-anniversary coinciding with the Day of the Maccabees, that is, August 1st, 432.

1

The next trace of Constantinople's Maccabean cult following the sermon of Gregory of Nazianzus is likewise found in a sermon, this time on Saint Eleazar, teacher of the seven brothers. It was delivered by John Chrysostom, probably in 398/99, and was thus the only text of his on the Maccabees to have been written after he left Antioch. As the end of the text makes clear, a church or chapel dedicated to the Maccabees had meanwhile been built a short distance outside the city:¹¹

And so I call on your grace to come to the festival full of ardor. Swarm out to the martyrs' wounds like bees from their basket, embrace their tortures without fearing the great length of the path. For if the aged Eleazar confronted the fire and the mother of those blessed ones suffered such great pain in extreme old age, what is your excuse if you fail to cross over a few stadia to view their struggles?

Soon after this, the same church outside the city is mentioned in a miraculous story about St. Dalmatos stemming from sometime

⁸ Mischa Meier, "Die Translatio des Christusbildes von Kamulianai und der Kreuzreliquie von Apameia nach Constantinopel unter Justin II.: Ein übersehenes Datierungsproblem," *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 7 (2003): 237–50.

⁹ Antoine Frolow, *Les reliquaires de la Vraie Croix*, vol. 8, Archives de l'Orient chrétien (Paris: Institut français d'études byzantines, 1965), no. 32–4, 178–81.

¹⁰ On the following see Schatkin, "The Maccabean Martyrs," 108–11.

¹¹ John Chrysostom, "Homilia XI," in Migne, PG 63, col. 530 end; see Schatkin, "The Maccabean Martyrs," 105–08; Ziadé, *Les martyres Maccabées*, 155–162, French translation *ibid.*, 333–44.

between 406–16.¹² Dalmatos, the founder of the first monastery in Constantinople, came from Syria, where the Maccabee cult was flourishing.¹³ Later on two churches dedicated to the Maccabees are mentioned in the liturgical calendar of the Church of Constantinople. The oldest extant versions of this calendar go back to the late ninth and early tenth centuries; in these versions, the entry for the August 1st Maccabees' festival ends with the following words: "But their memory is celebrated in their martyrs' church in the Portico of Domninus, and on the other side in Elaia."¹⁴

This second church lying outside Constantinople already existed at the end of the fourth century. Elaia was a place located to the city's north, beyond the Golden Horn on a hill above the suburb of Sykai, hence in the vicinity of the present-day Galata tower. And in connection with the siege of Constantinople in 626, a Church of the Maccabees is mentioned as being located precisely here. The Avars, located near the church, tried to use signal fires to make contact with the Persians marching forward on the opposite, Asiatic side of the Bosphorus.¹⁵ But the church could not have been very important since it is not referred to in the so-called *Notitia urbis Constantinopolitanae* compiled in the 420s and was not included in Justinian's great sixth century renovation project.

The site of the church mentioned in the liturgical calendars, the Portico of Domninus, was a street with colonnades on both sides leading up from the bank of the Golden Horns through what is now the bazaar area. In the Late Byzantine period it was designated as simply the *makros embolos*, "long colonnaded street."¹⁶ The putative relics of the Holy Maccabees probably lay in this urban church since their transfer to Constantinople in the late sixth century. Although this is not indicated in the calendar or any other Byzantine source, a Russian pilgrim, Anthony of Novgorod, attests to having viewed the heads and other relics of the Maccabees in 1200, while honoring these holy figures at the church.¹⁷ In any event, the absence here of Byzantine

¹² Vita of Dalmatos (*Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca* no. 482), in *Imperium orientale* ed. Anselmo Banduri (Paris: Coignard, 1711), 2: 697–703, 698C.

¹³ The monastery's first abbot, Isaakios, likewise had Syrian origins.

¹⁴ *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, ed. Hippolyte Delehaye (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1902), 860.11–2.

¹⁵ *Chronicon Paschale*, ed. Ludwig Dindorf, *Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae* (Bonn: Weber, 1832), 717.22–718.3.

¹⁶ See Albrecht Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos*, vol. 8, *Poikila byzantina* (Bonn: Habelt, 1988), 442–4.

¹⁷ Marcelle Ehrhard, "Le livre du pèlerin d'Antoine de Novgorod," *Romania* 68 (1932): 44–65, 61.

sources is in itself not unusual: despite all the significance accorded the veneration of relics in principle, interest in them in Constantinople seems to have been very limited, despite or precisely on account of their marked proliferation in that city. While indeed honored, occasionally also divided up, and inlaid in precious materials, they tended to lay in closed shrines or coffins. For the most part, their mention in Byzantine texts is merely *en passant*.¹⁸ Hence, what we know about their veneration in the city is mainly based on reports by Western European and Russian pilgrims such as Anthony of Novgorod.

We are informed of the way the liturgical festival of the Maccabees was celebrated in Constantinople on August 1st through the menologies, Orthodox collections of hagiographic texts arranged by month. For that date, the menologies contain one or more of the known sermons on the Maccabees, for instance those of Gregory of Nazianzus or that of Joannes Chrysostom,¹⁹ or else, especially after the fresh editing of the collections in the tenth century, they contain the fourth book of the Maccabees itself, always the authoritative text for veneration of these saints throughout the Byzantine realm.²⁰

In today's Orthodox Church, one particular canon, which is to say a long chanted hymn, is presented to mark the festival and a particular biographical notice from the liturgical calendar is read out loud.²¹ If the attribution to the poet Andreas of Crete is accurate, the canon stems from the early eighth century. In contrast to the biographical notice, here only Eleazar and the mother of the holy seven are directly named.²² This is the case as well with the other canons from the Byzantine period devoted to the Maccabees; they are pieces that are no longer part of the liturgy.²³

¹⁸ Hence the *Patria*, a local history of Constantinople from the late tenth century, contains few references to relics, but these are very frequent in the report of an English pilgrim appearing scarcely a century later (Berger, *Untersuchungen*, 155–58; Krijnie N. Ciggaar, “Une description de Constantinople traduite par un pèlerin anglais,” *Revue des études byzantines* 34 [1976]: 211–67); and the cult of relics also plays a merely marginal role in the liturgical calendar (Delehay, *Synaxarium*).

¹⁹ John Chrysostom, “Eis tous hagious Makkabaious kai eis ten metera auton,” in Migne, PG 50, col. 617–24, 623–26, 625–28 and idem, “Homilia XI,” in Migne, PG 63, col. 523–30. French translation in Ziadé, *Les martyres Maccabées*, 313–29.

²⁰ See Albert Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1937–1952), I.1–3: *passim*; Ziadé, *Les martyres Maccabées*, 34–38.

²¹ Delehay, *Synaxarium*, 859.4–860.12.

²² On the names of the seven brothers see below.

²³ Alcestis Proiou, *Canones Augusti*, vol. 12, *Analecta hymnica graeca e codicibus eruta Italiae Inferioris* (Rome: Istituto di studi Bizantini e Neolllenici, Università di



Figure 1. The Fresco of Sancta Maria Antiqua.²⁴

Roma, 1980), 1–11, 409–13; Enrica Follieri, *I calendari in metro innografico di Cristoforo Mitileneo*, vol. 63, *Subsidia hagiographica* (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1980), 2: 389–91.

²⁴ Pietro Romanelli and Per Jonas Nordhagen, *S. Maria Antiqua* (Rome: Istituto poligrafico, 1964), colour table II and p. 53.

The oldest extant Christian illustration of the seven Maccabees is a fresco in the church of Sancta Maria Antiqua in Rome stemming from the mid-seventh century, most likely from the time of Pope Martin I (649–53). It is considered a typical example of the period's "Byzantine" style. Rome at that time stood under the strong cultural influence of Orthodox monks from the Holy Land and Syria, some of whom fled to the West from the Persians after 614 while still others fled from the Moslem Arabs after 634.²⁵ The illustration depicts the brothers as a group together with their mother Solomone and their teacher Eleazar; these two figures are endowed with their names, inscribed in Greek letters.

It appears that no frescos of the holy Maccabees are extant in the actual Byzantine realm. What we do have, however, is an entire series of miniatures: some tenth and eleventh century illustrated manuscripts of the sermons of Gregory of Nazianzus contain illustrations for his sermon on the Maccabees. But since these depict the various tortures endured by the seven brothers, and these tortures are not described in any detail in the sermon, it is clear that they were not originally conceived for this text but rather for an illuminated manuscript of the Fourth Book of the Maccabees.²⁶ The brothers are here represented either together with their mother and Eleazar or in their martyrdom, both in a series of individual scenes and together as a group.

Another pictorial depiction of the Maccabees from the Byzantine period is found in a ninth century Psalter now located in the Pantokratoros monastery in Athos. It illustrates Psalm 78 in the Septuagint (Psalm 79 in the Masoretic Hebrew enumeration), whose first two verses read: "O God, the heathen have come into thy inheritance; they have defiled thy holy temple; they have laid Jerusalem in ruins. / They have given the bodies of thy servants to the birds of the air for food, the flesh of thy saints to the beasts of the earth." That the dead

²⁵ See Jean-Marie Sansterre, *Les moines grecs et orientaux à Rome aux époques byzantine et carolingienne, milieu du VI^e s. – fin du IX^e s.*, vol. 2, Académie Royale des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux Arts de Belgique. Classe des Lettres et des Sciences Morales et Politiques: Mémoires de la Classe des Lettres (Bruxelles: Palais des Académies, 1983).

²⁶ George Galavaris, *The illustrations of the liturgical homilies of Gregory Nazianzenus*, vol. 6, Studies in manuscript illumination (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 109–17.



Figure 2. The Seven Maccabees with Eleazar and Solomone.²⁷

²⁷ Par. gr. 550 (12. Jh.) fol. 49r. Galavaris, *The illustrations*, table 90 illus. no. 411.

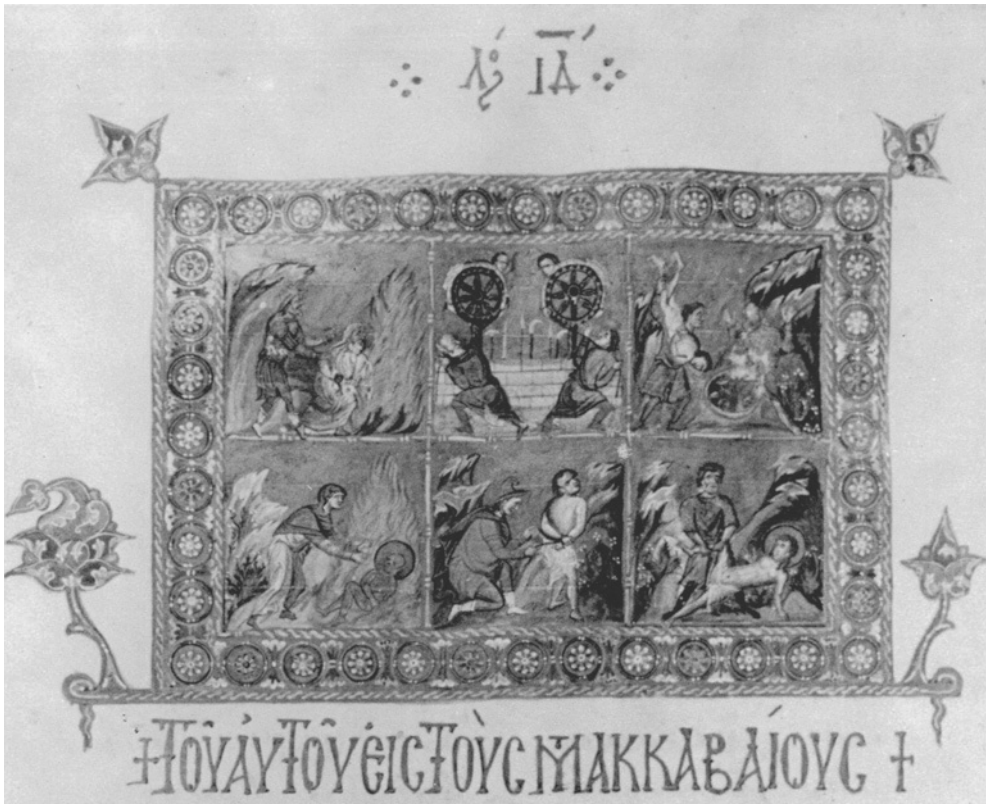


Figure 3. The Martyrdom of the Maccabees.²⁸

²⁸ Sin. gr. 339 (12. Jh.), fol. 381v. Galavaris, *The illustrations*, table 83 illus. no. 392.

figures in the illustration are meant to be the Maccabees is only apparent from the inscribed identification of the king sitting next to them as Antiochus.²⁹

Modern icons of the Maccabees closely resemble the above-mentioned group-depictions in the manuscripts, a fact that does not necessarily imply the presence of a continuous tradition.

3

In 4 Maccabees, neither the seven brothers nor their mother are named, but only their teacher Eleazar. This forms a contrast with the Roman fresco, which furnishes inscriptions of both his name and that of the Maccabees' mother, designated as *Solomone*. In the Jewish tradition, however, she is named both Hannah and Miriam bat Tanchum.³⁰ She first receives a "Christian" name in a fourth century Syrian martyrology translated from the Greek. The name is *Š'mûnî*, which most likely should be understood as a simple variant of *Ašmûnith*, "the Hasmonean woman."³¹ And in fact, in the Arabic version of a description of Antioch whose contents originate in the sixth century, the sepulchral church of the Maccabees is referred to as the "church of the holy *Ašmûnith*."³² In its Greek or Latin form the name would have to be something like *Samuna*, but there is no evidence of that form in either the Greek Orthodox or Western church context. Rather, what we find is *Solomone* and *Salomone*, names only used for the mother of the Maccabees. Later they appear in a range of variants: *Solomóne*, *Salomóne*, *Solomoné*, and *Solomonís*.

In however many variants, the name did not, however, suffice for a regular Christian cult of saints, and in the liturgical calendars we thus find the seven brothers themselves receiving names by the ninth century at the latest. These names themselves would make their way to the Latin West: Abibion, Antonios, Gourias, Eleazar, Eusebonas, Samonas,

²⁹ Stylianos Pelekanides et al., *Oi thesauroi tou Agiou Orous. Eikonographemena cheirographa*, vol. 3 (Athens: Ekdotike Athenon, 1979), illus. no. 218.

³⁰ See Robin Darling Young, *The "Woman with the soul of Abraham": Traditions about the mother of the Maccabean martyrs*, vol. 1, Early Judaism and its Literature (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 67–81, footnote 1 with references.

³¹ Ziadé, *Les martyres Maccabées*, 56–7; text edited by William Wright, "An ancient Syriac martyrology," *Journal of Sacred Literature* 8 (1865–66): 4–47.

³² Schatkin, "The Maccabean Martyrs," 101, after Mariano Rampolla Del Tindaro, *Del luogo del martirio e del sepolcro dei Maccabei* (Roma: Bessarione, 1897), 390.

and Markellos. They too would appear in different variants. Resolving the question of their origins and meaning does not seem difficult. To start with, the name Eleazar appears clearly to be taken over from the teacher Eleazar mentioned in 4 Maccabees. Next, Gourias, Samonas, and Abibos are the names of three Syrian martyrs who are said to have met their deaths in Edessa in 306.³³ In Syriac, the name Samonas was rendered as Š'mûnâ, thus representing the masculine form of the female name Š'mûnî, from which the mother's name Salomone emerged.

Finally, we know the names Eusebonas and Abibion from the monastic history of Theodoretos of Kyrrhos, where they are referred to as the founders of a monastery in which Simeon the Stylite began his famous ascetic career around 403.³⁴ We have no other examples of these names in this form, which is to say instead of the more common Eusebios and Abibos. When, in one version of the transmitted text, the youthful Maccabee Eusebonas is called Eusebios, this may well be a simple *lectio facilior*.

That a Jew would have the Greek name Eusebonas in the second century B.C.E. is certainly conceivable, but this is not the case with the two remaining, clearly Latin names Antonios and Markellos. Both names were commonplace in Syria of the Late Roman period as they were throughout the East. Consequently, the famous Bishop of Apameia may have been the inspiration for Markellos, his namesake.³⁵

All in all the choice of these names points to their being ascribed to the seven brothers when their cult was still concentrated in Antioch and Syria, hence before Islam's entry into the Roman world. But the names never became fully tied to the brothers, something made clear by their introduction to the brief notice in the liturgical calendar alone and their absence from both hymnography and iconic inscriptions. It appears that no text ties any of the seven martyrdoms with one of the seven names.

³³ In the Synaxar of Constantinople: Delehay, *Synaxarium*, 225.1–22.

³⁴ Theodoretos of Kyrrhos, *Histoire des moines de Syrie* 1, ed. Pierre Canivet, vol. 234, Sources chrétiennes (Paris: Éditions du Cerf 1977), chap. 26, 4.

³⁵ Theodoretos of Kyrrhos, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5, 21, ed. Günther Christian Hansen, vol. 5, Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller (Berlin: Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften 1998); see also Delehay, *Synaxarium*, 891.1–22.

Although always present within the Orthodox Church, the cult of the Maccabees did not play a prominent role in it. Among the reasons for this low profile may be the fact that by the seventh century at the latest, religious discrimination against the Jews and Judaism had reached a level rendering a veneration of these pre-Christian saints very difficult, despite the previous adoption of their cult.³⁶ Nevertheless, the motif of the seven brothers with their pious mother had great suggestive power, which led to a Christian doublet to it emerging by the fifth century, when the Maccabean cult was still flourishing in Antioch and in the western part of the Roman Empire.

This doublet is the story of St. Felicitas and her seven sons Felix, Philippus, Martialis, Vitalis, Alexander, Silanus, and Januarius. The story's setting is Rome in the time of Antoninus Pius; it consists essentially of an enumeration of tortures inflicted on the brothers and mother.³⁷ The legend seems to have united seven familiar and perhaps thoroughly historical persons buried in various catacombs into a fictive fraternal group, their mother being added as a unifying element.³⁸ The legend had already appeared in the form it now takes in the writing of Petrus Chrysologus (died 451). Stemming from the sixth century, the first known image of the martyrs, which is now destroyed, was located in Rome's S. Felicità catacomb.³⁹

In the West, the cult of Felicitas and her sons became moderately popular; in the East it remained unknown. In contrast, the second such doublet circulating around the same time, the story of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesos, became a huge success in the course of the centuries throughout the West and the Islamic world.

Briefly summarized, the story's contents are as follows: Engaged in persecuting the Christians, Emperor Decius (249–51) comes to Ephesos, leading seven Christian youths to hide in a cave near the city.

³⁶ See for example Andrew Sharf, *Jews and Other Minorities in Byzantium* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1995).

³⁷ *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina*, no. 2853: "Felicitas et septem filii".

³⁸ Maria-Barbara von Stritzky, Art. "Felicitas, hl.," in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (Freiburg: Herder, 1995), 3: 1216–7; also Pizzolato, *I sette fratelli*, 75.

³⁹ Hippolyte Delehaye, *Étude sur le légendier romain*, vol. 23, *Subsidia hagiographica* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1936), 116–23; Filippo Caraffa, "Felicità e VII figli, santi, martiri di Roma," in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* (Rome: Città Nova, 1964), 5: 605–8.

On the emperor's orders, the cave's entrance is walled up and the seven fall into a deep sleep. Only a long time afterwards, under the government of Emperor Theodosius II, a time when the heretics are expressing doubt concerning the resurrection of the dead, the cave is coincidentally reopened. The youths awaken and enter the city, which they find entirely changed. They are interviewed by the bishop, who here presents them to an assembled synod. The emperor himself then pays them a visit before they re-enter the cave and die there blessed.

Some of the story's details suggest that it began circulating directly following the time of the putative miracle. In different versions, the youths' sleep lasts different lengths between 182 and 372 years. However, their waking in the 38th year of the emperor's rule leads us – depending on whether our starting point is his coronation to co-emperor or sole emperor – to either the year 440 or the year 446. In fact, the latter is more likely since Emperor Theodosius, who died in 450, appears as a living person. Therefore, the synod of Ephesos, in which the seven brothers were putatively presented, can only be that of 449. Because of its highly tumultuous nature, this assembly became known as the “robbers' synod.” Only two years later it was condemned by the Council of Chalcedon because of its monophysitic tendencies. In this context there was naturally no direct word about the Seven Sleepers; but one indirect reference might exist.⁴⁰ For in the debate, the bishop who would be deposed at the conference, Stephanos of Ephesos, under whom the miracle of the Seven Sleepers would have taken place, was indirectly characterized by another bishop as a “maker of pickles”. This was seemingly because he had presented the public with corpses that were allegedly hundreds of years old but were nonetheless remarkably well kept.⁴¹

All this may be the reason for the story of the Seven Sleepers only surfacing in the sources after a fifty-year delay and then first in a monophysitic text by the Syrian Jacob of Saruq.⁴² And much suggests that the idea of propagating this legend originated with Syrian-monophysitic participants in the synod of 449, to whom the story's

⁴⁰ So Ernest Honigmann, “Stephen of Ephesus (April 15, 448–Oct. 29, 451) and the Legend of the Seven Sleepers,” in idem, *Patristic Studies*, vol. 173, Studi e testi (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1953), 125–68.

⁴¹ See *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum: Iussu Atque Mandato Societatis Scientiarum Argentoratensis II. Concilium universale Chalcedonense*, 1.3, ed. Eduard Schwartz (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1965), 522.29–31; Honigmann, “Stephen of Ephesus,” 164–5.

⁴² *Acta Sanctorum Iulii VI* (Antwerpen: Jacobus du Moulin, 1729), 387B–389B.

motifs were already known from the East because they were strongly familiar with the cult of the Maccabees in Antioch. As it happens, a Syrian background of the Seven Sleepers had been postulated a long time ago, but was subsequently rejected by scholarship, as the legend clearly originates from Ephesos.⁴³ At all events, it would seem that the Maccabees have never been mentioned in this context.

The parallel to the story of the Maccabees consists above all in the seven persons involved. At the same time, there is a clear difference: the youths from Ephesos are no brothers, have no common mother or family, and suffer no martyrdom in the sense of a violent death. Nevertheless, viewing the Seven Sleepers' legend as a purely Christian response to the Maccabean narrative would appear well grounded. Like the Maccabees, the Seven Sleepers seem initially to have had no names. Jacob of Saruq only names one of them, Iamblichos, who at first goes alone into the city of Ephesos. The oldest source we have furnishing all the brothers with names Achillides, Diomedes, Eugenius, Stephanus, Probatius, Sabbatius und Quiriacus is Theodosius, a pilgrim from the West, who visited Ephesos in 530 on the way to the Holy Land.⁴⁴ But his list is completely different from that of Gregory of Tours, who lived in Francia in the late sixth century.⁴⁵ Gregory offers the following names: Maximilianus, Malchus, Martinianus, Constantinus, Dionysius, Johannes and Serapion.⁴⁶ This latter set of names also appears in liturgical calendars of the Middle Byzantine period,⁴⁷ suggesting that Gregory had recourse to Eastern models.

The passage in Theodosius is above all remarkable because the Seven Sleepers are here brothers and are venerated together with their mother, who "was called Caritina in Greek and Felicitas in Latin."⁴⁸ In this manner, the similarities between the legends of the Seven Sleepers and the brothers from Rome had the result that scarcely a century

⁴³ Honigmann, "Stephen of Ephesus," 131–3.

⁴⁴ "Theodosii 'De situ terrae sanctae'," in *Itineraria et alia geographica*, vol. 175, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina (Turnhout: Brepols, 1965), 1:113–25, chap. 26.

⁴⁵ Gregory of Tours, "Passio sanctorum martyrum septem dormientium apud Ephysum", in *Gregorii Turonensis opera*, vol. 2. MGH. Scriptores rerum merovingicarum 1.2, ed. Wilhelm Arndt and Bruno Krusch (Hannover: Hahn, 1885), 848–853; *idem*, "Gloria martyrum", *ibid.*, 500–2 (chap. 94).

⁴⁶ The name Constantinus (Greek Konstantinos) actually first emerged with Emperor Constantine the Great, born roughly a generation *after* the persecutions of Decius.

⁴⁷ Delehay, *Synaxarium*, 155.9–156.6.

⁴⁸ "Theodosii 'De situ terrae sanctae'" (note 44 above).

after their emergence, the two Maccabean derivatives had contaminated each other. Let us note in passing that Theodosius presents his readers not only with the seven brothers and their mother, but also with their dog, named Viricanus, otherwise only known in the Islamic Seven Sleepers' tradition.⁴⁹ In any event, the Maccabees would always be spared this form of veneration, which is to say a cult with an integrated pet.⁵⁰

Later on in the orthodox East, the stories of the Maccabees and the Seven Sleepers would occasionally be connected. Hence, the cave of the Seven Sleepers was localized at several places in the eastern Mediterranean region including Paphos on Cyprus. This city is occasionally also described as the place where the seven Maccabees experienced martyrdom together with their mother.⁵¹

In the end, the mingling of the Seven Sleepers' legend with the story of the Maccabees reached Jewish terrain: a modern Judeo-Persian poem tells of a successful defense of Jerusalem against an attack at the time of the high priest Mattathias, an attack by a King Antiochus who has Decianus as his second name.⁵²

5

When it comes to the seven Maccabee brothers themselves and their reception in the Christian East, we can observe that all references to them have one thing in common: the brothers are perceived only as martyrs, not as warriors for the true faith. This reception is highly distinct from what we can observe at the same time in Western Europe,

⁴⁹ Koran, *Sura* 18:18.

⁵⁰ It is worth noting that the dog's odd name, Viricanus, has led to the argument that its mention is a later interpolation and actually presumes the Islamic legend: in the phrase *aṣḥāba l-kaḥfi wa-l raqīmi* in *Sura* 18 of the Koran, the incomprehensible *wa-l raqīmi* ("and the note") was probably falsely transcribed from *wa-l ruqūd* ("and the sleepers") and subsequently interpreted as the dog's name (otherwise in the Islamic tradition it is named Kitmīr). The name Viricanus may be derived from this and thus considered a later interpolation. See James A. Bellamy, "Al-Raqim or al-Ruqūd? A note on *Surah* 18:9," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 111 (1991): 115–7.

⁵¹ Hippolyte Delehaye, "Saints de Chypre," *Analecta Bollandiana* 26 (1907): 161–301, 272; Frederick William Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), 1: 311; George Jeffery, *Cyprus Antiquities* (Nicosia: 1918. Reprint London: Zeno, 1983), 402.

⁵² Wilhelm Bacher, "Zur jüdisch-persischen Litteratur," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 16 (1904): 525–58, 529.

the reason for this being the different political development in the two regions.

Throughout its existence, the Byzantine Empire defined itself as a universal Christian Roman empire; this was the case even when it had sunk to the level of a powerless petty state. Not only did all citizens of this state have to be Christians, but, as ideally conceived, all Christians in the world also had to be citizens of this state. This historical model originated in Late Antiquity during the Christian Roman Empire, and the extent to which it led itself *ad absurdum* through the political rise and Christianization of Western and Northern Europe over the centuries only became clear to the Byzantines when their empire was facing extinction.

If Christianity was not conceivable without the Roman state and vice versa, then this meant that external attacks on the Byzantine Empire always represented an apocalyptic threat to humanity, for a threatened end to this state had to be understood as an announcement of the end of the world.⁵³ In the nearly nine hundred years between the death of Emperor Justinian in 565 and the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans in 1453, the territory controlled by the empire became steadily smaller; there were very few phases in which lost territory could be regained.⁵⁴ But these conquests never involved additional territory to that previously controlled by the state, and the ideological tie between Christianity and the Roman state meant that with few exceptions there was also no Christian mission beyond the earlier borders.⁵⁵

⁵³ On this problem-complex, see among other works Agostino Pertusi, *Fine di Bisanzio e fine del mondo: significato e ruolo storico delle profezie sulla caduta di Costantinopoli in Oriente e in Occidente*, vol. 3, Nuovi studi storici (Rom: Istituto Storico per il Medio Evo, 1988); Wolfram Brandes, "Anastasios ho Dikoros: Endzeit-erwartung und Kaiserkritik in Byzanz um 500 n. Chr.," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 90 (1997): 24–63.

⁵⁴ Exceptions were as follows: in the late eighth century, the southern Balkan peninsula; in the years between 961 and 969, Crete, Cyprus, and Northern Syria; and finally Bulgaria, reincorporated into the Byzantine state after a war lasting from 976 until 1018.

⁵⁵ Russia did, however, receive Christianity from Byzantium in 988, this came about through the political efforts of Prince Vladimir himself. On the Byzantine attitude towards missionary activity see also Sergey A. Ivanov, "Mission Impossible: Ups and Downs in Byzantine Missionary Activity from the Eleventh to the Fifteenth Century," in *The Expansion of Orthodox Europe: Byzantium, the Balkans and Russia*, ed. Jonathan Shepard (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2007), 251–65.

In such circumstances, the idea of a “holy war” could only take root in the Byzantines’ religious and political conceptual world in exceptional cases;⁵⁶ the church almost always rejected the idea. In this respect one exemplary episode took place a few years after the re-conquest of Crete from the Arabs in 961. That effort had been led by General Nikephoros Phokas, who subsequently became emperor. After his victory, he tried to have all soldiers fallen during the re-conquest religiously venerated as martyrs, but the effort failed because of the Church’s bitter resistance.⁵⁷

An even more extensive religious legitimization of war involving approval of an active “killing for faith” is not to be found in the Byzantine realm. That may be the reason why the seven Maccabee brothers were perceived exclusively as martyrs, and in turn help explain the increasingly strong veneration of mother Salomone to the point where she would partly supplant her sons.

6

Following Antony’s visit in the year 1200, no more information is available about the relics of the seven Maccabees in Constantinople. We may assume that following the city’s conquest by crusaders in 1204 they were plundered and brought to the West together with so many other relics. Concerning the true status of the hip bones “of the holy Maccabees” shown to an Italian pilgrim in 1395 in the great church of the Mother of God in Athens (i.e. the Parthenon), serving at the time as a Catholic cathedral, we know nothing whatsoever.⁵⁸

For the Late Byzantine period, between the crusaders’ expulsion from the city in 1261 and its conquest in 1453 by the Ottomans, the only references we have are to a relic of Salomone. Two Russian pilgrims

⁵⁶ See e.g. Vitalien Laurent, “L’idée de la guerre sainte et la tradition byzantine,” *Revue historique du sud-est européen* 23 (1946): 71–98.

⁵⁷ Ioannes Zonaras, *Epitomae historiarum* 16, 25, 22–3, ed. Theodor Büttner-Wobst, vol. 50, *Corpus scriptorum historicae byzantinae* (Bonn: Weber, 1897), 3: 506.10–9; *idem*, in *Syntagma ton theion kai hieron kanonon IV*, ed. Georgios A. Rhalles and Michael Potles (Athens: A. G. Chartophylakos, 1854), 132; Venance Grumel, *Les registres des actes du patriarche de Constantinople* (Paris: Socii assumptionis Chalcedonenses, 1932–47), no. 790.

⁵⁸ Io notaio Nicola de Martoni: *Il pellegrinaggio ai luoghi santi da Carinola a Gerusalemme, 1394–1395* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale no. 6521 du fonds latin), ed. Michele Piccirillo, vol. 42, *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Collectio maior* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 2003), 140.

who visited Constantinople in 1349 und 1391 respectively saw the holy woman's skullcap in the Stoudios monastery but they saw no relics of her sons.⁵⁹ It is thus unclear whether the skullcap represented the last remains of the Maccabean relics from the church in the city's center or rather indicates a new tradition emerging in the Late Byzantine period.

The relic of Salomone continues to be preserved in the church of Istanbul's Greek Orthodox patriarchate, in one of three modern shrines placed alongside each other, next to the remains of St. Euphemia of Chalcedon and the holy empress Theophano. This group of three holy women gains its special charm from all possible stages of the authenticity of relics being in a sense here represented. In the case of Empress Theophano, there are no reasonable grounds for doubting that the remains are really of this historical personage (died 896).⁶⁰ The bones claimed to be those of Euphemia, martyred in 304, are probably the same as those apparently considered hers since the mid-fifth century but at the latest since their staged rediscovery in 797.⁶¹ As far as Salomone's skullcap is concerned, it is clear that she cannot be any historical personage; putting aside the above-mentioned, single reference to her in Antioch, her relics only appear in the sources at a time when we have no further references to those of the seven brothers.

The Stoudios monastery stood at least until the conquest of Constantinople. What happened with the buildings afterwards is unknown; the church was in any case transformed soon after into a mosque.⁶² Probably at that time, Salomone's supposed relics were moved to the Christos Pammakaristos monastery, site of the Greek Orthodox patriarchate since 1456.⁶³ They are reported as being there by two travelers

⁵⁹ George P. Majeska, *Russian travelers to Constantinople in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries*, vol. 19, Dumbarton Oaks Studies (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library & Collection, 1984), 39, 147, 286.

⁶⁰ Cf. George P. Majeska, "The Body of St. Theophano the Empress and the Convent of St. Constantine," *Byzantinoslavica* 38 (1977): 17–18.

⁶¹ See Rudolf Naumann and Hans Belting, *Die Euphemia-Kirche am Hippodrom zu Istanbul und ihre Fresken*, vol. 25, *Istanbuler Forschungen* (Berlin: Mann, 1966), 126–7. – In any event the profanation of the church in 759 here assumed to be historical is certainly legendary; see Berger, *Untersuchungen*, 556–9.

⁶² Raymond Janin, *Constantinople byzantine: Développement urbain et répertoire topographique*, vol. 4A, *Archives de l'Orient chrétien* (Paris: Institut français d'études byzantines, 1964), 430–40.

⁶³ Janin, *Constantinople byzantine*, 208–13; Horst Hallensleben, "Untersuchungen zur Baugeschichte der ehemaligen Pammakaristoskirche, der heutigen Fethiye Camii in Istanbul," *Istanbuler Mitteilungen* 13–14 (1963–64): 128–93.

who visited the church shortly before the patriarchate was driven from it in 1586, the structure then itself being turned into a mosque.⁶⁴ Following some temporary locations in various churches in the area, the patriarchate finally took its permanent seat in the Georgios church in Constantinople's Fener district. It remains located there in modern Istanbul and the relic of Salomone remains located within it.

⁶⁴ Hans Jacob Breuning, *Orientalische Reyß* (Straßburg: Johann Carolo, 1612), 67f.; *Stephan Gerlachs des Aelteren Tage-Buch* (Frankfurt: Johann David Zunners, 1674), 462. See most recently Neslihan Asutay-Effenberger, "Zum Datum der Umwandlung der Pammakaristoskirche in die Fethiye Camii," *Byzantion* 77 (2007): 32–41.

MIDDLE AGES

THE MOTHER AND SEVEN SONS IN LATE ANTIQUE AND MEDIEVAL ASHKENAZI JUDAISM: NARRATIVE TRANSFORMATIONS AND COMMUNAL IDENTITY

Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski

INTRODUCTION

The story from the Maccabean literature of the Second Temple period that most influenced late antique and medieval Ashkenazi Judaism was not the story of Judas Maccabeus. Rather, the account of the Maccabean martyrs, that of the mother (variously named Miriam or Hannah) and her seven sons,¹ first recorded in 2 Maccabees 7 held a central place in the articulation of late antique and medieval Jewish identity.² With the account being read as conveying (like the Maccabean narrative itself) Jewish adherence to the covenant with God in face of Roman and Christian pressure, this reception can be understood as a response to Diaspora life with its periods of persecution and violence.³ In this

¹ In the context of Jewish sources, I will consistently refer to the “mother and seven sons” rather than the “Maccabean martyrs.” The mother and seven sons are never referred to as “Maccabean” in any late antique or medieval Jewish source; nor, in fact, is the family of Judas Maccabeus (in that case we read of the “sons of Hashmonay” or “the house of Hashmonay”). See Gunter Stemberger, “The Maccabees in Rabbinic Tradition,” in *The Scriptures and the Scrolls: Studies in Honour of A.S. van der Woude*, ed. F. García Martínez (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 193.

² The account of the Maccabean martyrs found in 4 Maccabees does not have much in common with rabbinic and other medieval Jewish traditions in philosophy, rhetoric, form, and message. For an introduction to 4 Maccabees, see David A. de Silva, *4 Maccabees* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

³ The following discussion will not consider the reception of the narrative of the mother and seven sons in Sephardic Judaism, although Sephardic texts did preserve this narrative tradition. For example, the narrative appears in the chronicler Ibn Daud’s *Divrei Malkhei Yisrael be-Vayit Shen*; Moses Maimonides’ *Iggeret ha-Shemad Yisrael* (*Epistle on Persecutions*); and a number of liturgical pieces and Judeo-Arabic romances. See Gerson D. Cohen, “Hannah and Her Seven Sons in Hebrew Literature,” in *Studies in the Variety of Rabbinic Literature* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 51, 54–55; Moshe Attia, *Romancero Seferadi* [Hebrew], (Jerusalem: Machon Ben Tsvi, 1961), song no. 87, “Hannah’s Seven Sons,” 194–195; Isaacov Hassan and Elena Romeo, “Qinot paraliturgicas: Edición y variantes,” *Estudios Sefardies* 1 (1978): 3–57; Eleazar Gutwirth, “A Judeo-Spanish Planctus from the Cairo Genizah,” *Romance Philology* 49 (1996): 420–429; Shulamit Sela, “The History of the Hasmonean Period in the Judeo-Arabic Literature of the Middle Ages [Hebrew],” *Michael* 14 (1997): 9–28.

light, the following discussion will chronologically consider three sets of texts illustrating the particularly Jewish reception of the story of the mother and her seven sons.

1

The redactors of rabbinic texts drew from existing oral traditions, organizing and revising them to suit the purposes of their new compositions. In its various recensions, the story of the mother and seven sons was part of a larger corpus of midrash (rabbinic narrative exegesis) on martyrs and martyrdom, with several of the midrashic texts relating events from the Hadrianic persecutions accompanying the defeat of the second Jewish revolt against Rome. Among the various martyrdom narratives from this period, the most prominent featured a group known as the Ten Martyrs, which included Rabbi Akiva.⁴ Because of this literary association, rabbinic editors generally identified the time of the martyrdom of the mother and seven sons not as the Second Commonwealth and the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, as in 2 Maccabees 7, but as the Hadrianic persecutions unfolding in the 130s of the Common Era.⁵

Three different basic versions of this narrative exist within rabbinic literature: *Eichah Rabbah* (the midrash on Lamentations) 1.16, BT *Gittin* 57b, and *Pesikta Rabbati* 43. There are slight variants between

Judah ha-Levi composed a liturgical piece featuring Hannah and her seven sons. See *Shirei ha-Qodesh le-Rabbi Yehudah ha-Levi*, ed. Dov Yarden (Jerusalem: Dov Yarden, 1979–1985), 3: 884–887.

⁴ The story of the Ten Martyrs was well known during the medieval period. Relevant texts include *Eichah Rabbah* 2.2; Babylonian Talmud [henceforth BT] *Sanhedrin* 14a; BT *Berachot* 61b; and the Yom Kippur liturgical martyrology *Eleh Ezkerah*. On early rabbinic martyrdom and halachic discussions of it, see Louis Finkelstein, “The Ten Martyrs,” in *Essays and Studies in Memory of Linda R. Miller*, ed. Israel Davidson (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary Press, 1938), 29–55; Saul Lieberman, “The Martyrs of Caesarea,” *Annuaire de l’institut de philologie et d’histoire orientales et slaves* 7 (1939–44): 395–446; *idem*, “Roman Legal Institutions in Early Rabbinics and Acta Martyrum,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 35 (1944): 1–58; Aaron Oppenheimer, “Sanctity of Life and Martyrdom Following the Bar Kokhba Revolt [Hebrew],” in *Sanctity of Life and Martyrdom: Studies in Memory of Amir Yekutieli*, ed. Isaiah M. Gafni and Aviezer Ravitzsky (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 1992), 85–97; Shmuel Safrai, “*Qiddush ha-Shem* in the Teachings of the Tanaaim [Hebrew],” *Zion* 43 (1979): 28–42; Solomon Zeitlin, “The Legend of the Ten Martyrs and Its Apocalyptic Origins,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 36 (1945–46): 1–16.

⁵ See Gerson Cohen “Hannah and Her Seven Sons in Hebrew Literature,” *Studies in the Variety of Rabbinic Literature* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 40.

these versions, and other midrashic collections containing the narrative build on them.⁶ It is difficult to say to what degree these strands of the tradition depend on the narrative of 2 Maccabees 7, as none of them acknowledge this Greek account. In light of the narrative variations between these two textual families, we might surmise that several oral traditions about a particular family that resisted coercion were in circulation. Different Jewish groups, including Hellenized and rabbanized, Palestinian and Babylonian, preserved the story.⁷

Redacted from the fifth to eighth centuries, these rabbinic compilations contain traditions attributed to authors from the third to fifth centuries. *Eichah Rabbah* was probably redacted some time in the early fifth century and, for the most part, cites Palestinian *amoraim* (scholars who lived between 200 and 500 C.E.).⁸ *Pesikta Rabbati*, a composite work, is a collection of sermon-like texts for feasts and special Sabbaths. Section 43 is concerned with the mother and seven sons; it was probably redacted no later than the sixth to seventh century C.E. with an initial composition around the fifth century, probably in Palestine.⁹ BT *Gittin* 57b contains reflections on the destruction of Jerusalem and the suffering of its inhabitants at various times. In this text, the story of the mother and her seven sons is attributed to Rav Yehudah, a Babylonian *amora* from the late third century, with the account likely reflecting, in line with what has been suggested, events tied to the Bar Kochba Revolt and measures taken by Hadrian. Although scholars acknowledge that the Babylonian Talmud underwent a lengthy

⁶ As Gerson Cohen indicates, two of these texts serve as the basis for distinct literary variants of the narrative. Thus *Seder Eliahu* 28 developed from the midrash on Lamentations 1:6 and the midrash on *Lamentations Zuta* 21 from BT *Gittin* 57b. The latter text was anthologized in the medieval period in *Yalkut Lamentations* 1017–19. *Pesikta Rabbati* 43 has features distinct from the other two and had little influence on other midrashim. See Cohen, “Hannah and Her Seven Sons,” 55–56, n. 3. Robert Doran, “The Martyr: A Synoptic View of the Mother and Her Seven Sons,” in *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism: Profiles and Paradigms*, ed. George W.E. Nickelsburg and John J. Collins (Chico: Scholars Press, 1980), 189–221, has explored the oral nature of these texts and their relationship and recension history.

⁷ G. Cohen, “Hannah and Her Seven Sons,” 50; Tessa Rajak, “Dying for the Law: The Martyr’s Portrait in Jewish-Greek Literature,” in *Portraits: Biographical Representation in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire*, ed. Mark J. Edwards and Simon Swain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 57.

⁸ See Hermann L. Strack and Gunter Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, trans. and ed. Markus Bockmuehl (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 285–286.

⁹ Strack and Stemberger, *Talmud and Midrash*, 292–300.

redaction process, there is a general consensus that its present contents, including *Gittin*, were compiled in the sixth century C.E.¹⁰

Though the redactors of these texts may have been familiar to some degree with the written narrative of 2 Maccabees 7, this narrative was orally transformed to address the phenomenon of martyrdom in the second-century framework of failed revolt. Nevertheless, it is important to note that as literary constructions the texts did not represent actual events, rather being iterations of popular folk narrative, incorporating and reflecting both experiences of imperial oppression within broad segments of the Jewish population and rabbinic interpretations of those experiences.¹¹ Within this popular framework, the martyrdom narrative allowed Jews in Late Antiquity to address the reality of other religious communities with their competing claims.¹²

The content of these texts thus both centered on the Roman persecutions and offered a critique of idolatry and the imperial cult, on the one hand, contemporary Christian beliefs and practices, on the other hand. In this respect, the differences between the narrative's rabbinic versions and 2 Maccabees 7 suggest areas of embedded polemic, manifest, in a manner to be clarified below, in the new foregrounding in the midrash of the pagan command to commit idolatry as the factor precipitating martyrdom, in contrast to the focus in 2 Maccabees on the consumption of pork.

In part, the rabbinic emphasis on resisting idolatry reflected growing tensions with Christian communities – something that becomes clear in the emerging relationship between the ideas of martyrdom (or *kiddush ha-Shem*, “the sanctification of the Name [of God]”) and covenant in rabbinic thought. Fidelity to Torah in the form of martyrdom expressed a clear distinction between Israel and Gentiles, or between

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 194–197.

¹¹ G. Cohen, “Hannah and Her Sons,” 45, 50. Galit Hasan-Rokem, *Web of Life: Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*, trans. Batya Stein (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 109–111, views *Eichah Rabbah* as an example of the adaptation of folk motifs by both elite groups such as rabbis and sages and broader social groupings, including women.

¹² Galit Hasan-Rokem, “Narratives in Dialogue: A Folk Literary Perspective on Interreligious Contacts in the Holy Land in Rabbinic Literature of Late Antiquity,” in *Sharing the Sacred: Religious Contacts and Conflicts in the Holy Land, First-Fifteenth Centuries C.E.*, ed. Guy Strousma and Arie Kofsky (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi, 1998), 109–129; *idem*, *Web of Life*, 1–7; 108–109.

the people of God and idolaters.¹³ In our context, we see, for example, that in both *Eichah Rabbah* and BT *Gittin* 57b, the mother of the seven sons compares herself to Abraham, the initiator of the covenant between the nation of Israel and God, offering his son Isaac for sacrifice (Gen 22; cf. 4 Macc. 14:20–15:3). Known as the *Aqedah* (“binding”), this event was a touchstone motif for martyrdom in rabbinic literature. In these rabbinic passages, the mother actually declares that she has surpassed Abraham in that she has offered her seven sons up to real death while Isaac was finally rescued from the divinely ordered sacrifice. Now, importantly, in early Christianity the binding of Isaac was linked typologically with the crucifixion of Jesus and the establishment of a new covenant between God and the followers of Jesus.¹⁴ In both traditions, the matriarchal figure involved is a woman identified as Miriam.¹⁵ In its representation of a devotion surpassing Abraham’s, the midrashic portrayal of the mother’s willing surrender of all her sons – contrasting with Mary’s grief at the death of her single son – was meant to both convey the importance of commitment to the Abrahamic covenant and refute Christian claims to establishment of a new covenant through Jesus’ death.

In general, the rabbinic theme of fidelity to Torah served as a counterpoint to a Christian supersessionism that had become increasingly central in the late antique period, that is, to the theological principle that Jewish adherence to the covenant received at Sinai and the Jewish claim to the title of Israel had both been obviated by rejection of Jesus and participation in the crucifixion. Correspondingly, in sermons and treatises on the Maccabean martyrs, authors such as Cyprian of Carthage, Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, and Augustine of Hippo had argued that the martyrdom represented not death for the

¹³ On the development of the concept of martyrdom, and particularly the terminology and meaning of *kiddush ha-Shem*, within rabbinic Judaism, see footnote 4 above and David Grunewald, “*Qiddush ha-Shem*, an Examination of a Term [Hebrew],” *Molad* 24 (1968): 476–484; Avraham Holtz, “Kiddush and Hillul Hashem,” *Judaism* 10 (1961): 360–368; Shepkaru, *Jewish Martyrdom*, 67–106.

¹⁴ See Shalom Spiegel, *The Last Trial: On the Legends and Lore of the Command to Abraham to Offer Isaac as a Sacrifice: The Akedah*, trans. Judah Goldin (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 1993), 83–86, 117–120; Jon D. Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 125–142.

¹⁵ See Hasan-Rokem, *Web of Life*, 121; Goldin, *Ways of Martyrdom*, 81, fn. 82–83. Goldin takes up Hasan-Rokem’s emphasis on the similarity between the names Miriam and Mary.

Torah but for Christ the Lawgiver, the martyrs thus being Christians before Christ, perceiving the truth of Christ veiled beneath the Law.¹⁶ In distinction, the rabbinic texts on the mother and her seven sons, in addressing the Christian cult of martyrs by defining the mother and her seven sons as distinctly Jewish, present a narrative about fidelity to a body of norms and behaviors unaltered in essential meaning. Hence when brought before the emperor, the sons all firmly declare such normative adherence in a direct act of defiance.

2

In transmitting the story of the mother and her seven sons, *Sefer Josippon*, a tenth-century southern Italian chronicle of the confrontation between Rome and Israel in the Hasmonean period, played a key role in renewing interest in this narrative within medieval Ashkenazi Judaism. A composite of various sources, the chronicle's name reflects its role as an adaptation of writing of Josephus. Its sources encompass Josephus's *Antiquities*, the Latin reworking of Josephus' *Jewish Wars* assigned to Hegesippus (that name itself being a corruption of "Josephus"), and the Vulgate, including apocryphal works such as Judith and Tobit. Notably, the author relied heavily on 1 and 2 Maccabees in his treatment of the Hasmonean wars. In this manner, through the *Sefer Josippon* Jewish apocryphal works that had been preserved by Christians entered the Ashkenazic Jewish tradition.¹⁷ Although the author presumably was aware of the earlier midrashic versions, the narrative of the mother and her seven sons in this text stemmed directly from a Latin version of 2 Maccabees 7.¹⁸

¹⁶ See Cyprian of Carthage, *Letter to Fortunatus*, Migne, PL 4: 665–673; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration XV, In Praise of the Maccabees*, Migne, PG 35: 287; John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Holy Maccabees and their mother, I–III*, Migne, PG 50: 617–628 and *On Eleazar and the Seven Sons*, Migne, PG 65, col. 520–530; Augustine of Hippo, *Sermon 300–301, On the Feast of the Maccabean Martyrs*, Migne, PL 38, col. 1376–1385. For a study of these texts, see Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, *Christian Memories of the Maccabean Martyrs* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 29–77.

¹⁷ David Flusser, "'Josippon,' a medieval Hebrew version of Josephus," in *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity*, ed. Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 386–397.

¹⁸ For this text, see *Sefer Josippon*, ed. David Flusser (Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar, 1978), 1: 70–75.

This reliance on 2 Maccabees meant strong emphasis on the death of the seven sons as a form of atoning sacrifice.¹⁹ From the Maccabean account, *Sefer Josippon* took over the theme of necessary obedience to the Torah, together with a message of both retribution for Antiochus and historical redemption for Israel.²⁰ While conveying the main events from the earlier text, we encounter new narrative and thematic elements, perhaps most significantly, the designation of the sons and mother as *kedosh*, “holy.”²¹ Although the original version of *Sefer Josippon*, like 2 Maccabees, does not name the mother, later editions identified her as Hannah.²²

The close leaning on 2 Maccabees suggests a significant degree of acculturation by segments of tenth century southern Italian Judaism. Straddling the Latin and Greek regions of Christendom before the break between Rome and Byzantium, the author of *Sefer Josippon* may well have been acquainted with Christian hagiographical and literary traditions centered on the Maccabean martyrs. Christian cults of the martyrs in Constantinople, Rome, and Milan may thus have offered the cultural context for designating the mother and her seven sons as “holy.” Interestingly, in incorporating a text transmitted by Christians into Jewish historical narrative, thus, as it were, reclaiming the text for the Jews, the author was engaging in the same practice long exercised by Christians with Jewish texts and traditions. While reflecting an awareness of the Christian appropriation of the Maccabean martyrs by way of 2 Maccabees 7, designation of the mother and her seven sons as “holy” clearly defined them as such for the Jewish community, not for the Christians in Italy or Byzantium.

¹⁹ *Sefer Josippon*, 1: 72.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1: 70.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1: 72, line 41, I: 74, line 69. Cf. Raphaëlle Ziadé, *Les martyrs Maccabées: de l'histoire juive au culte chrétien: Les homélies de Grégoire de Nazianze et de Jean Chrysostome*, vol. 80, Supplements of the *Vigiliae Christianae* (Brill: Leiden, 2006).

²² For these later editions, see for example *Josippon by Joseph ben Gorion Hacoheh: History of the Jews during the period of the Second Temple, and the War between the Jews and Romans. Reprinted according to the Complete Edition of Venice 5304 with supplements from the Mantua Edition (5238–5240) and the Constantinople Edition (5270) with added remarks and preface*, ed. Hyam Hominer (Jerusalem: Hominer Publications, ²1961), 73–78.

The account of the mother and her seven sons made its way into medieval Ashkenazi traditions through both the rabbinic sources and the *Sefer Josippon*.²³ In the aftermath of the Ashkenazi encounter with the crusading enterprise of medieval Latin Christianity, the account was reframed as a polemical response to surrounding Christian culture. At the same time, the texts involved in this process reveal the adaptation of medieval Jewish culture to a Christian environment and its traditions.

In the spring of 1096, loosely organized bands of Christians engaged in brutal attacks on the Jewish communities of the Rhineland. Some were inspired by the call to crusade by Pope Urban II while others acted out of monetary and political motivations.²⁴ What here unfolded was a process of violence and destruction in which Jews were, at times, faced with a choice between conversion and death. In the wake of the attacks, writing by Jewish survivors emerged that tried to make sense of them. For the most part, such writing took the form of constructed theological reflection, selecting and privileging earlier martyrdom accounts to describe and explain contemporary episodes of the same sort. The authors here made prominent use of figures and images from the Jewish past, including the Temple sacrifice, the binding of Isaac, and the narratives of both the Ten Martyrs and the mother and her seven sons. Within these texts, the latter narrative was tied rhetorically to contemporary episodes in which women killed their children and then themselves rather than submit to crusaders' baptism. Three forms of medieval Jewish literature incorporated the narrative within this context: first, Hebrew chronicles of the First Crusade, where it served

²³ On the familiarity of the Ashkenazi community with BT *Gittin* 57b, the Franco-German recension of *Lamentations Rabbah*, *Pesikta Rabbati*, and the *Sefer Josippon*, see Gerson Cohen, "Hannah and Her Sons," 42–43; Norman Cohen, *The Manuscripts and Editions of the "Midrash Pesikta Rabbati": A Prolegomenon to a Scientific Edition* (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew Union College, 1977); Robert Chazan, *God, Humanity and History: The Hebrew First Crusade Narratives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 181, 192–200; *idem*, *European Jewry and the First Crusades* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 149–150; Steven Bowman, "Yosippon and Jewish Nationalism," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 61 (1995): 23–51. For a skeptical view of the normative role of *Sefer Josippon* for Ashkenazi Judaism, see Haym Soloveitchik, "Halakhah, Hermeneutics, and Martyrdom in Medieval Ashkenaz (Part II of II)," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 94.2 (2004): 281–284.

²⁴ On the composition of the Christian perpetrators, see Chazan, *European Jewry*, 61–84; Kenneth Stow, "Conversion, Apostasy, and Apprehensiveness: Emicho of Flonheim and the Fear of Jews in the Twelfth Century," *Speculum* 76 (2001): 911–933.

as an element in the story of Mistress Rachel of Mainz; second, a variety of liturgical poems, known as *piyyutim*, composed as reflections on the tragic events; and third, *responsa* (rabbinic legal rulings) concerning the question of the legitimacy of parents killing their children rather than permitting their forced baptism during the pogroms.

The most striking element of the 1096 Christian assaults on the Jewish communities of the Rhineland was arguably not the violence perpetrated but the Jewish response to it. Aware that the “crusaders” intended to kill anyone who refused conversion, the Jews affected appear to have responded in one of three basic ways:²⁵ many saved themselves by either fleeing or acquiescing through conversion;²⁶ others submitted to death in a manner similar to what we find in classic rabbinic narrations of martyrdom; and others engaged in actions scholars have referred to as “active martyrdom,” a term denoting both suicide and the killing of both other Jewish adults and children, in the latter case to prevent their forced baptism and upbringing as Christians.²⁷ In this regard, we need to note that within the Jewish conceptual world of the eleventh century, the “martyrdom” of children, in particular, was widely considered nothing short of a necessity, since to be raised as a Christian meant becoming a member of a condemned religion and thus risking personal damnation.²⁸ Within Ashkenazic Judaism of the time, concepts of personal damnation and reward had themselves been intensified through contact with Christian culture.²⁹ Nevertheless, with that exception, while passively enduring death at the hands of a persecutor unquestionably was in accordance with the *Halacha* (the large corpus of rabbinic legal rulings), the “active” response to the organized anti-Jewish assaults witnessed in 1096 was something new –

²⁵ Chazan, *European Jewry*, 123ff.

²⁶ On the question of whether most survivors converted under duress, see Jeremy Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God: Jewish Martyrs and Jewish Memories of the First Crusade* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 4–9; David Malkiel, “Vestiges of Conflict in the Hebrew Crusade Chronicles,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 52 (2001): 332.

²⁷ Abraham Gross, *Struggling with Tradition: Reservations about Active Martyrdom in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 4.

²⁸ See Haym Soloveitchik, “Halakhah, Hermeneutics, and Martyrdom in Medieval Ashkenaz (Part I of II),” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 94 (2004): 77–108, 105–106; Gross, *Struggling*, 10.

²⁹ See Shmuel Shepkaru, “From After Death to Afterlife: Martyrdom and Its Recompense,” *AJS Review* 24/1 (1999): 1–44 and *idem*, “To Die for God: Martyrs’ Heaven in Hebrew and Latin Crusade Narratives,” *Speculum* 77 (2002): 311–341.

it would reemerge periodically in similar circumstances up to the fourteenth century within Ashkenazic Jewry – and halachically far more problematic.³⁰ In their assessment of the new phenomenon, medieval Jewish authors eschewed appeals to Talmudic legal discussions of martyrs and martyrdom, instead referring to relevant midrashic texts on both martyrdom and suicide, including texts treating the binding of Isaac, the Ten Martyrs, the episode of the three youths and fiery furnace in Daniel 3, the account in BT *Gittin* 57b of 400 Jewish boys and girls on a slave ship who drown themselves rather than serve in the Roman brothels for which they are destined,³¹ the death of Saul in 1 Samuel 31, and not least of all, the story of the mother and her seven sons. Despite the ambivalence of leading rabbinic scholars over these various tradition-embedded episodes, they were used to justify what were perceived as similar acts of martyrdom unfolding in the events of 1096, the piety and devotion of the Jews involved thus holding primacy over rabbinic legal norms.³² This development anticipated efforts to reconcile local Ashkenazic custom with the evolving normative force of the Talmud, as manifest especially in the activities of the Talmudic scholars known as Tosafists in France and Germany between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries.³³

Shmuel Shepkaru has shown that in the period of the Rhineland pogroms, both Jews and Christians had a propensity to view faith-centered

³⁰ See Gross, *Struggling*; Haym Soloveitchik, "Religious Law and Change: The Medieval Ashkenazic Example," *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 12 (1987): 205–221; *idem*, "Halakhah, Hermeneutics, and Martyrdom in Medieval Ashkenaz (Part I of II)," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 94, no. 1 (2004): 77–108; *idem*, "Halakhah, Hermeneutics, and Martyrdom in Medieval Ashkenaz (Part II of II)," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 94, no. 2 (2004): 278–99.

³¹ See Soloveitchik, "Halakhah, Hermeneutics, and Martyrdom in Medieval Ashkenaz (Part I of II)," 83–84.

³² Chazan, *European Jewry*, 120–121; Simha Goldin, *The Ways of Jewish Martyrdom* [Hebrew] (Lod: Dvir, 2002), 228–232; Gross, *Struggling*, 5–32; Soloveitchik, "Halakhah, Hermeneutics, and Martyrdom (Part I of II)," 101–102.

³³ For more on the Tosafists, see Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Masters of Tosafot* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Mosad Byali, 1955); Ephraim Kanarfogel, *Jewish Education and Society in the High Middle Ages* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992); Norman Golb, *The Jews in Medieval Normandy. A Social and Intellectual History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 379–412. Although the story of the mother and seven sons is preserved in the Hebrew crusade chronicles and liturgical celebrations of Hanukkah, it did not occupy a significant place in Tosafist thought. The Tosafot commentary on BT *Gittin* 57b, i.e. on the mother and seven sons, is sparse, concerned primarily with the meaning of words and phrases. The Tosafists' lack of interest in this narrative is not surprising, given their main interest in reconciling contradictions between Talmudic texts and Ashkenazic customs.

confrontations in cosmic terms and to experience an extreme sense of devotion to God, extending to a readiness for self-sacrifice based in part on a certainty of heavenly reward for such expressions of devotion.³⁴ Correspondingly, Robert Chazan views the “active martyrdom” of the Rhineland Jews as a “counter-crusade” transforming the crusaders’ focus on regaining Jerusalem and devotion to an imitation of the savior’s suffering into a rhetoric of Jewish sacrifice.³⁵ Notably in this respect, Ivan Marcus has observed that while the poorly organized bands that assaulted the Jews in fact never made it to Jerusalem, the Jews who accepted martyrdom were considered to have recreated the Temple in their midst, in this manner accruing merit in the eyes of future generations while making evident the truth of Judaism and falsehood of Christianity.³⁶ In this framework, as we will see in more detail below, the killing of children by their parents could even be understood as one form of the martyr’s defiant reenactment of the sacred ritual of priestly offerings in the Temple. It was likewise defined symbolically, in part, as a response to the central Christian ritual of the Eucharistic offering,³⁷ Ashkenazi martyrologies thus serving, beyond their praise of martyrdom, as polemical refutations of Christian supersessionism.

In following the movement in these texts between Jewish resistance to Christian physical violence and ideological pressure, on the one hand, and rhetoric reflecting acculturation to surrounding Christian society, on the other hand, we can perceive a concern, in the context of the pogroms, with using martyrdom and its theological vocabulary to reinforce boundaries and distinctions. Although in evaluating the historical value of the texts in question, we certainly need to take account of their status as stylized, literary narratives,³⁸ it is nonetheless

³⁴ Shepkaru, “From After Death to Afterlife”; *idem*, “To Die for God.” For an interesting discussion of one aspect of medieval Jewish-Christian interaction see Elisheva Baumgarten, *Mothers and Children: Jewish Family Life in Medieval Europe*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004). For an interpretation of the slaughter of children during the 1096 assaults, see 178–183. See also Elisheva Baumgarten and Rella Kushlevsky, “From ‘The Mother and her Sons’ to ‘The Mother of the Sons’ in Ashkenaz [Hebrew],” *Zion* 71.3 (2006): 301–342.

³⁵ Chazan, *European Jewry*, 126–132.

³⁶ Ivan G. Marcus, “From Politics to Martyrdom: Shifting Paradigms in the Hebrew Narratives of the 1096 Crusade Riots,” *Prooftexts* 2 (1982): 40–52.

³⁷ Ivan Marcus, *Rituals of Childhood: Jewish Acculturation in Medieval Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 6; *idem*, “From Politics to Martyrdom.”

³⁸ On the debate over this historicity, see Marcus, “Politics to Martyrdom,” 41–42; Simha Goldin, “The Socialisation for ‘Kiddush ha-Shem’ among Medieval Jews,” *Journal of Medieval History* 23.2 (1997): 117–138; Avraham Grossman, *Pious and Rebellious: Jewish Women in Medieval Europe*, trans. Jonathan Chipman (Waltham, MA:

clear that the texts did reflect both Jewish survivors’ perception of their Christian neighbors and strategies for maintaining identity as a clearly identifiable cultural minority.

4.

During the Rhineland pogroms, a woman whose identity has come down to us as Mistress Rachel of Mainz killed her four children rather than have them baptized by crusaders. This Rachel, the wife of Rabbi Judah and daughter of Rabbi Isaac ben Asher, was a historical figure. However, her deeds took on symbolic resonance through their recounting in two chronicles, that of Solomon bar Samson and that of an anonymous chronicler from Mainz, both composed between the First and Second Crusades (ca. 1104–1147).³⁹ A tabular comparison of the two versions of this account will help us understand the meanings embedded within it.

Table 1. Comparison of “Mainz Anonymus” and “Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson”

<i>Mainz Anonymous</i> ⁴⁰	<i>Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson</i> ⁴¹
A. There was a distinguished young woman there named Mistress Rachel, daughter of Isaac, son of Asher.	Who has seen or heard of an act like the deed of the righteous and pious young Mistress Rachel, daughter of Isaac, son of Asher and wife of Judah?
B. who said to her friend: “Four children have I. Have no mercy on them either, lest those uncircumcised ones come and seize them alive and raise them in their ways of error.	She said to her friends, “Four children have I. Have no mercy on them, lest those uncircumcised ones come and seize them alive and raise them in their way of error.

Brandeis University Press, 2004), 199–201; Jeremy Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 7–9, 55–59; Malkiel, “Vestiges of Conflict,” 328–340.

³⁹ For the critical edition of the Hebrew First Crusade chronicles, see *Hebräische Berichte über die Judenverfolgungen während des Ersten Kreuzzugs*, ed. Eva Haverkamp. *Mounumenta Germaniae Historica*, Hebräische Texte aus dem mittelalterlichen Deutschland, vol. 1 (Hannover: Hahnsche, 2005).

⁴⁰ The translation is taken from Eidelberg, *Jews and the Crusaders*, 111–112; cf. translation in J. Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 107–108. For the Hebrew text, see Haverkamp, *Hebräische Berichte*, 351–359.

⁴¹ Eidelberg, *Jews and the Crusaders*, 35–36; cf. translation in J. Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 108–109. For the Hebrew text, see Haverkamp, *Hebräische Berichte*, 351–359.

Table 1 (*cont.*)

	<i>Mainz Anonymous</i>	<i>Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson</i>
C.	In my children, too, you shall sanctify the Holy Name of God.”	In my children, too, you shall sanctify the Holy Name of God.”
D.	One of her friends came and took the knife.	One of her friends came and took the knife to slaughter her son.
E.	When Rachel saw the knife she cried loudly and bitterly and smote her face, crying and saying: “Where is your grace, O Lord?”	When the “mother of the sons” saw the knife, she cried out wildly and bitterly and smote her face and breast, and said, “Where is your grace, O Lord?”
F.	She [the friend] then took Rachel’s little son Isaac, who was a delightful boy, and slaughtered him. She [Rachel] had spread her sleeves between the two brothers and said to her friend: “Upon your life do not slaughter Isaac before Aaron.”	With an embittered heart she [the mother] said to her companions: “Do not slaughter Isaac before his brother Aaron, so that he [Aaron] will not see the death of his brother and flee.” A friend took the boy and slew him. A delightful little child he was. The mother spread her sleeves to receive the blood, according to the practice of the ancient Temple sacrificial rite. ⁴²
G.	The lad Aaron, upon seeing that his brother had been slaughtered, cried, “Mother, mother, do not slaughter me”; and fled, hiding under a box.	The lad Aaron, upon seeing that his brother had been slaughtered, cried, “Mother, do not slaughter me,” and he fled, hiding under a box.
H.	Rachel then took her two daughters, Bella and Madrona, and sacrificed them to the Lord, God of hosts, Who commanded us not to depart from His pure doctrine, and to remain wholehearted with Him.	She also had left two daughters, Bella and Madrona, modest and beautiful maidens. The maidens took the knife and sharpened it, so that it would have no notch. They extended their throats, and the mother sacrificed them to the Lord, God of hosts, Who commanded us not to depart from His pure doctrine, and to remain wholehearted with Him, as it is written in Scripture, “Thou shalt be wholehearted with the Lord thy God.”

⁴² The phrase in Cohen reads “and she received the blood in her sleeves instead of in the cultic chalice of blood.” Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 121, notes this imagery parallels contemporary Christian iconography of *Ecclesia* at the foot of the cross collecting the blood of Jesus into a eucharistic chalice. He suggests Eidelberg may have deliberately obscured the sense of this phrase out of personal discomfort with such imagery. But in a footnote to the text, Eidelberg, *Jews and the Crusaders*

Table 1 (*cont.*)

	<i>Mainz Anonymous</i>	<i>Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson</i>
I.	When this pious woman had completed sacrificing three of her children to our Creator, she raised her voice and called to her son Aaron: "Aaron, where are you? I will not spare you either or have mercy on you." She drew him out by his feet from under the box where he had hidden and slaughtered him before the Exalted and Lofty God.	When this pious woman had completed sacrificing her three children to their Creator, she raised her voice and called to her son, "Aaron, Aaron where are you? I will not spare you either, or have mercy on you." She drew him out by his feet out from under the box where he had hidden and slaughtered him before the Lofty and Exalted God.
J.	Rachel then placed them on her lap in her two sleeves, two children on one side and two on the other, beside her stomach, and they quivered beside her until finally the errant ones captured the chamber and found her sitting and lamenting over them.	Then she placed them all on her arms, two children on one side and two on the other, and they quivered beside her, until finally the enemy captured the chamber and found her there sitting and lamenting over them.
K.	They said to her: 'show us the money you have in your sleeves'; but when they saw the slaughtered children, they smote and killed her upon them.	They said to her: "Show us the money you have in your sleeves"; but when they saw the slaughtered children they smote and killed her upon them, and her pure soul expired.
L.	It is of her that it was said: "The mother was dashed in pieces with her children."	It is of her that it was said: "The mother was dashed in pieces with her children."
M.	She perished with them, as did that righteous woman who perished with her seven sons, and it is of her that it was said: "The mother of the children rejoices" (Ps. 113.9).	Thus she died together with her four children, just as did that other righteous woman with her seven sons; and about them it is written: "The mother of the sons rejoices" (Ps. 113.9). ⁴³

151, n. 91, does indicate that its language here refers to the basin used to catch blood in Temple sacrifices, as in Ex. 29:18–21. Chazan, *European Jewry*, 259, translates the as "she received the blood in her sleeves instead of in the [Temple] vessel for blood."

⁴³ This quotation concludes all three midrashic narratives of the mother and seven sons.

In seeking to explain why mothers slaughtered their children rather than allowing them to be captured and baptized, the authors of these two chronicles drew on a core narrative defining Rachel's actions according to an established model of martyrdom. Like most of these chronicles, this small pericope is rich in allusions.

The relationship between the story of Mistress Rachel and the rabbinic adaptation of 2 Maccabees 7 is not immediately clear. The main difference between the mother's role in the two texts is that Rachel kills her children rather than simply watching them die or encouraging them to meet their deaths. This is only one of two portrayals of women killing their children in extant Jewish chronicles of the Crusades: the *Chronicle of Rabbi Eliezer bar Nathan* includes an account of such a deed by a mother from Moers. In both episodes fathers are absent, hence unable to perform the "martyrdom" themselves, and the mothers are portrayed as especially praiseworthy. Another difference is that here, rather than being presented with sons who refuse to partake in impure sacrifices, we find sons themselves sacrificed by their mother, young Aaron even pleading for his life.

As part of the process through which the rabbinic account of the mother and her seven sons was retrieved, its transformation in these fundamental ways reflects a foregrounding of the message of martyrdom's value, in particular the value of the phenomenon's "active" variant. Thus the striking emphasis on the mother's actions, the celebration of her grief and ultimate rewards incurred, and the re-imagining of Rachel as an agent of the construction of a new Temple in Mainz. But this new focus on action conveys a broader message celebrating a refusal to cross boundaries of religious affiliation. For as in the rabbinic narratives, the conflict in these chronicles is between the faithful and the idolatrous. The crusaders are full of "error," their ways, as reflected in their actions, corrupt. Indeed, the Christians in these texts act much like the emperor and henchmen toward Rachel in *Pesikta Rabbati*, killing Miriam because of her resistance. We should here note the citation of Psalm 113:9 ("a happy mother of children") at the end of both the *Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson* and the anonymous Mainz chronicle. The same ending is found in all three *midrashim* on the mother and her seven sons, the parallel usage clearly indicating that the authors of the accounts were familiar with at least one of the three rabbinic texts.

While entirely credible on an empirical level, the troubling response of Rachel's son Aaron, hiding from his mother and having to be

dragged from under furniture to be killed, would appear to also reflect considerable ambivalence concerning the episode or at least a strong awareness of the dilemma it posed on both human and ethical levels. Such an ambivalence may well have been, in part, that of the survivor, many having survived by simply opting for conversion, only to return to their communities at a later point.⁴⁴ In any event, the ambivalence both mirrors and illuminates the sometimes precarious nature of Jewish identity in twelfth-century western Europe, as encapsulated in twin anxieties: at loss of life by persecution and at loss of community by conversion.⁴⁵

5

Traditions centered on the deeds of Rachel of Mainz and contemporary women like her contained both inwardly and outwardly oriented meanings. On the former level, narratives such as Rachel's both justified the sorts of actions she engaged in and encouraged others to do likewise in similar desperate circumstances. On the latter level, they formed part of an anti-Christian polemic.

As reinforcement for the ideology of martyrdom, the righteousness of Rachel of Mainz and women like her was also underscored, rhetorically and thematically, in the *piyyutim*. For instance, in the liturgical lament, or *qinah*, "I said, 'Look away from me,'" Rabbi Kalonymos

⁴⁴ Malkiel, "Vestiges of Conflict," 334–337.

⁴⁵ On Jewish conversion in this period, see Karl F. Morrison, *Conversion and Text: The Case of Augustine of Hippo. Herman-Judah, and Constantine Tsatsos* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1992); Jonathan M. Elukin, "The Discovery of the Self: Jews and Conversion in the Twelfth Century," in *Jews and Christians in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. Michael A. Signer and John Van Engen (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 63–76; William Chester Jordan, "Adolescence and Conversion: A Research Agenda," in *Jews and Christians in Twelfth Century Europe*, 77–93; Joseph Shatzmiller, "Jewish Converts to Christianity in Medieval Europe, 1200–1500," in *Cross Cultural Convergence in the Crusader Period: Essays Presented to Aryeh Grabois on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Michael Goodich et al. (New York/Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 1995), 297–318. Susan Einbinder, *Beautiful Death: Jewish Poetry and Martyrdom in Medieval France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 24–25, 51–62, argues persuasively that certain *piyyutim* concerning martyrdom were composed to prevent young Jewish scholars from converting to Christianity, as they were perceived as particularly vulnerable to Christian missionary efforts. See also Grossman, "Cultural and Social Background of Jewish Martyrdom," 204–205.

bar Judah, a witness in Mainz of the events of 1096,⁴⁶ both refers to different members of the Jewish community who were slaughtered and speaks of mothers who killed children as follows: "Israel acknowledged the justice [of God's sentence] when she offered her young ones, and instead of dashing the blood [on the altar], she received it in the hem of her garment, wringing her hands and sobbing."⁴⁷ Kalonymos here takes up the early sacrifice centered imagery at work in the Rachel narrative. His poem concludes as follows: "Make known in our sight the avenging of the blood of thy servants; O Lord, God of vengeance, shine forth, O God of vengeance!"⁴⁸

An integration of the rabbinic narrative of the martyred mother and her seven sons into the Ashkenazic liturgy for Chanukkah seems to reflect an intensified focus on what was perceived as the symbolic meaning of her gesture. A poem for the first Sabbath of Chanukkah by Rabbi Joseph bar Solomon of Carcassone, entitled "I will give thanks to you for you were angry at me and you relented," thus offers a recapitulation – *Sefer Josippon* probably serving as the base text, albeit making use of a different vocabulary – of the martyrdom,⁴⁹ bar Solomon concluding the relevant section of the poem by recounting the death of the mother's youngest son. Witnessing the death of her children, the mother also dies. This poem ends with its own cry to God for vengeance: "My anger is too great to pass, remember these pious ones and their slaying."⁵⁰

⁴⁶ See Israel Davidson, ed., *Ozar ha-Shirah ve-ha-Piyyut*, rev. ed., 4 vols. (New York: Ktav, 1970), 1: no. 5971; Abraham Rosenfeld, ed., *Authorised Kinot for the Ninth of Av* (London: n.p., 1965; reprint. Jerusalem: C. Labworth, 1970), 139–142. All the *qinot* are recited on the 9th of Av, the fast day commemorating the destruction of the Jerusalem Temples. Rosenfeld, *Authorised Kinot for the Ninth of Av*, 139–142.

⁴⁷ This translation is from Rosenfeld, *Authorised Kinot*, 141.

⁴⁸ Rosenfeld, 141.

⁴⁹ *Siddur Otzar Ha-Tefilot Nusah Ashkenaz* (Vilna: n.p., 1914), 294–296, especially lines 48–74. In identifying Antiochus by name while leaving the mother unnamed, Ben Solomon did not follow the rabbinic texts. Direct reference to 2 Maccabees 7 is not evident, but is nevertheless possible. The text was part of the German Ashkenazi rite, and although it is difficult to fix the precise time its liturgical use began, it has been found in late twelfth century manuscripts of German provenance. For a full list of extant sources for this *piyyut*, see the manuscript database for the Institute for Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts at the Jewish National and University Library. For an example of a twelfth-century manuscript, see Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek 1103 (Institute film number F 19508).

⁵⁰ *Siddur Otzar Ha-Tefilot*, 296, lines 72–73.

Liturgical commemoration in *piyyutim* was the chief means through which the events and victims of 1096 would be called to mind for Ashkenazic Jewry,⁵¹ with repetition of the poems validating martyrdom in all its dimensions, thus encouraging resistance to acculturative pressures. The basic message at play here was by no means quietist, involving the reinforcement of anti-Christian sentiment for the sake of Jewish societal cohesion. At the same time, on a halachic level, the killing of one's own children in the context of dire persecution posed a continuing ethical challenge, the most prominent halachic *responsum* in this regard stemming from Rabbi Meir ben Baruch of Rothenburg (d. 1293). An anonymous writer had asked him to consider the case of a man who had killed his wife and children in Koblenz on April 2, 1265, in order to save them from forced conversion.⁵² Meir shaped his reply around rabbinic commentary from *Genesis Rabbah* 34 on Genesis 9:5, discussing Saul's suicide in 1 Samuel 31, seemingly evoking "active" martyrdom in that Saul in fact has his armor-bearer carry it out. Citing, among other examples, the suicide of the mother in BT *Gittin* 57b, Meir observed that although suicide was permissible as a form of martyrdom, it was nevertheless far from clear that one was ever called on to kill other human beings, a further search for evidence of active martyrdom's validity thus being needed. But Meir also noted that approval of the practice had been widespread, with many prominent sages having killed their children in similar situations.

Meir now submitted Kalonymos' poem as proof of the permissibility of even killing one's children in the context of martyrdom, an argumentative step of considerable interest in that normally halachic rulings relied on halachic texts and *piyyutim* on midrashic texts. Meir's turn to *piyyutim* thus revealed the difficulty he had in finding halachic backing for such behavior. His conclusion: no one should condemn this particular father from Koblenz or even to rule his deed required atonement, for to do so would be to condemn the martyrs of 1096.⁵³

⁵¹ Einbinder, *Beautiful Death*, 2.

⁵² *Teshuvot u-Pesakim R. Meir mi-Rothenburg*, ed. Isaac Kahana, 2 vols. (Jerusalem, 1960), 75. I follow the translation of Soloveitchik, "Halakhah, Hermeneutics and Martyrdom (Part I of II)," 98–100.

⁵³ On the logic of Meir's reasoning and its implications, see Soloveitchik, "Halakhah, Hermeneutics and Martyrdom (Part I of II)," 98–102; Gross, *Struggling*, 30–33; Goldin, *Ways of Jewish Martyrdom*, 228–232. For other rulings and debates on the permissibility of killing children in the framework of "active" martyrdom, see Soloveitchik,

Narratives and figures from 1 and 2 Maccabees were transmitted into both Christian and Jewish medieval culture; they emerged as a distinct discursive-rhetorical element in the political ideology of the Christian rulers in territories where Jews lived.⁵⁴ Monastic reformers, particularly those involved in the lay investiture controversy of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, promoted Judas Maccabeus and his brothers as models of reform, Judas Maccabeus even coming to represent an ideal of chivalric heroism.⁵⁵ Rupert of Deutz, active between the First and Second Crusades, commented heavily on 1 and 2 Maccabees in his *De Victoria Verbi Dei*. As the abbot of the Benedictine monastery at Deutz (1119–1129), across the Rhine from Cologne and its considerable Jewish population, Rupert interacted and debated with various Jewish leaders.⁵⁶ Even if the Jewish communities of the Rhineland were not directly aware of Christian devotion to the Maccabean martyrs, leading Jewish scholars would have at least been conscious of Christian use of the Maccabean books. The same scholars, having learned their own traditions within a Christian environment, were familiar with the rudiments of Christian belief, including the contents of the Christian Bible.⁵⁷ As has been indicated, the “Christian” version of the story of the mother and her seven sons, that is, 2 Maccabees 7, furnished the foundation for two significant medieval Jewish works: *Sefer Josippon* and Rabbi Joseph bar Solomon of Carcassone’s poem.

“Halakhah, Hermeneutics and Martyrdom (Part I of II),” 101–104; Gross, *Struggling*, 33–40.

⁵⁴ For example, Rabanus Maurus in part composed his commentaries on the Books of the Maccabees as a model for the Carolingian king Louis the Pious. Rabanus Maurus, *Commentaria in Libros Machabaeorum*, Migne, PL 109, col. 1125–1256.

⁵⁵ Jean Dunbabin, “The Maccabees as Exemplars in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries,” in *The Bible in the Medieval World. Essays in Honor of Beryl Smalley*, ed. Katherine Walsh and Diana Wood, vol. 4, Studies in Church History, Subsidia (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 31–41.

⁵⁶ Rupert of Deutz, *De Victoria Verbi Dei*, ed. Rhaban Haacke (Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1970).

⁵⁷ On medieval Jewish knowledge of Christianity, see David Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages: A Critical Edition of the Nizzahon Vetus* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979). In his introduction, Berger reviews all the extant medieval manuscript sources containing evidence Jewish polemics; there is no evidence that 2 Maccabees 7 or portions of the story of the Maccabean martyrs were an element in these polemics.

If a key element of the literary responses to the “crusader” assaults involved a refutation of Christian claims to be the true heirs of Israel and possessors of Jerusalem, then the revival of the rabbinic tradition of the mother and her seven sons and the adaptation of the “Christian” version found in 2 Maccabees 7 was part of this phenomenon. In turn, reclaiming that narrative for the Jewish community reinforced a vision of resistance against oppression, a vision that, like the recent acts of “passive” and “active” martyrdom themselves, in a sense transformed uncontrollable catastrophe into a confirmation of the possibility of a restored Jerusalem.

THE MACCABEES AND THE BATTLE OF ANTIOCH¹

Elizabeth Lapina

Narratives of the Crusades and, more specifically, of the First Crusade provide one of the most important clusters of references to the Maccabees – primarily the Maccabean warriors, but also the Maccabean martyrs – in Christian medieval sources. Many authors writing about the crusades used the stories of both types of the Maccabees, the warriors and the martyrs, to interpret current events in the Holy Land. There was a particularly large number of references in connection with one event: the Battle of Antioch, fought between crusaders and Muslims on June 28, 1098. Two more crucial references appear in the context of two more battles fought by Prince Roger of Antioch in the vicinities of the city: the Battle of Tall Danith (1115) and the Battle of the Field of Blood (1119).

Although there seems to be no direct connection between Antioch and the Maccabean warriors, the city was of paramount importance for the Maccabean martyrs. Although the locations of the martyrdom of seven Maccabean brothers, their mother, and Priest Eleazar and of their initial burial (the remains eventually found their way to Constantinople and Rome) are uncertain, a number of patristic sources mention Antioch in connection with them.² There is no doubt that at one point Antioch was the center of the Maccabean cult. In one of his sermons, St. Augustine of Hippo argues vehemently that the Maccabean martyrs belong not to the Jewish but rather to the Christian tradition. As proof, he refers to a church dedicated to the Maccabees in Antioch. Augustine found it ironic and fitting that the city bearing

¹ I would like to thank Professor Gabriela Signori for organizing the conference in which this article was originally presented. I am also grateful to Professors Gabrielle M. Spiegel and David Nirenberg for their help at various stages of my work on the Maccabees and to Professors Bernhard Jussen, Neithard Bulst, and Michael Borgolte for making it possible to present my findings at the University of Bielefeld and the Humboldt University, Berlin.

² On the Maccabees and Antioch as the place of their martyrdom and burial see Margaret Schatkin, "The Maccabean Martyrs," *Vigiliae Christianae* 28 (1974): 97–113.

nearly the same name as King Antiochus IV, the persecutor of the Maccabean martyrs, would celebrate those whom he persecuted.³

In Late Antiquity, Antioch suffered an unprecedented series of disasters from which it never recovered. The Crusades, however, signaled a rediscovery of the city by western Christians. On their way to Jerusalem, crusaders stopped at Antioch and besieged the city for eight months. Within days of its capture, they found themselves besieged in turn by an impressive army assembled by Kerbogha, *atabeg* of Mosul. The lack of supplies was drastic, desertions multiplied, the majority of horses were lost, and reports were made to the Byzantine emperor Alexius that the annihilation of the crusaders was imminent. In desperation, unable to continue their resistance in the long-depleted city, crusaders opted for a battle, in the course of which they routed Kerbogha's troops.⁴

Apart from its purely military significance, the Battle of Antioch was at the very center of medieval conceptions of the First Crusade. For many authors, the triumph of crusaders at this particular point, when everything foreboded disaster, proved the extent of God's support for the Christian side. For many contemporaries, this was made evident by a number of miracles reported in connection with the battle: the discovery of the Holy Lance; a multiplication of visions; and – most importantly for the present discussion – intervention of a number of saints, perhaps an entire celestial army, on the side of crusaders. In this manner, the battle would end up, to some degree, upstaging the capture of Jerusalem a year later.

It is unclear what exactly the crusaders and medieval chroniclers of the Crusades knew about the importance of Antioch within the cult of the Jewish martyrs in Late Antiquity. When describing the city, crusading sources do not mention the Maccabees. One of the rare exceptions is the so-called Charleville Poet, who claims that Antioch was very ancient: "The book of Maccabees asserts its [Antioch's] existence, when the priest is said to have perished, next to Daphne."⁵ The poet

³ Augustine, *Homily 300 In solemnitate martyrum Machabaeorum*, PL 38, col. 1379.

⁴ On the Battle of Antioch see John France, *Victory in the East: A Military History of the First Crusade* (Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 269–296.

⁵ Gilo of Paris, *The 'Historia Vie Hierosolimitane' of Gilo of Paris and a Second, Anonymous Author*, ed. and trans. Christopher Wallace Grocock and Elizabeth Siberry (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 95, 97.

is apparently alluding to the assassination of the pious Priest Onias in the vicinity of the city, described in the Second Book of Maccabees (2 Macc 4:34).

Still, it is possible that crusaders learned about the ancient cult of the Maccabees at Antioch during their interactions with the local population, which included a sizable Christian minority. At least some of the chroniclers of the First Crusade must have had access to St. Augustine's above-mentioned sermon. And they were undoubtedly familiar with King Antiochus IV Epiphanes, whom a variety of medieval sources present as an Antichrist-like figure.⁶ Just as St. Augustine did centuries earlier, they must have been capable of constructing an associative link between Antioch and the Maccabees through the intermediary of Antiochus. Whatever the case might be, the connection between the city of Antioch and the Maccabees displays a certain degree of continuity from Late Antiquity to the crusading period. However, if in Late Antiquity it was the Maccabean martyrs that attracted attention, during the crusading period it was the Maccabean warriors.

In general, medieval writers of history were always eagerly looking for biblical prototypes of later events and figures.⁷ While Maccabean martyrs hardly resembled crusaders, Maccabean warriors did. Maccabean warriors shared the name of the Maccabean martyrs, but, of course, not their fate, fighting Antiochus actively under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus. Both the Maccabean warriors and crusaders fought for control of the city of Jerusalem and took pride in the restoration of holy sites. While the Maccabees fought against a Pagan enemy, crusaders struggled against Muslims, whom they frequently associated with Pagans. Last but not least, both profited from divine help on the battlefield. Modern authors tend to accept as an axiom that in the twelfth century, there existed a strong identification between crusaders and the Maccabean warriors. Penny Cole wrote, for example, that "in all essential ways the struggles of the Maccabees against the

⁶ Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), *passim*.

⁷ On typology see Erich Auerbach, "Figura," in *idem*, *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature*, vol. 9, *Theory and History of Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 11–76; Hugh T. Keenan, ed., *Typology and English Medieval Literature* (New York: AMS Press, 1992); Earl R. Miner, ed., *Literary Uses of Typology from the Late Middle Ages to the Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

persecutor Antiochus...and by association, of the crusaders against Muslim infidel, are substantially identical.”⁸

Indeed, Baldwin I, the second ruler and first Latin king of Jerusalem, was called a “second Maccabee” in the laudatory inscription on his tombstone.⁹ Describing the Battle of Tall Danith, in which Prince Roger of Antioch emerged victorious, Fulcher of Chartres exclaims as follows: “For when did victory of fighters ever depend upon the number of men? Remember the Maccabees, Gideon, and many others who confided not in their own strength but in God and in that way overcame many thousands.”¹⁰

However, modern historians tend to overlook the fact that, from a theological standpoint, the resemblance between crusaders and the Maccabean warriors was problematic. Although Christian attitudes towards warfare were often ambiguous, many theologians shared a conviction that after the Incarnation, only spiritual fighting was worthwhile. For this reason, relatively few authors, either in Late Antiquity or the Middle Ages, paid any attention to the Maccabean warriors. Those who did, tended to consider them as prototypes not of actual soldiers, but of spiritual warriors engaged in battles between virtues and vices.¹¹

⁸ Penny J. Cole, *The Preaching of the Crusades to the Holy Land, 1095–1270*, vol. 98, *Medieval Academy Books* (Cambridge: The Medieval Academy of America, 1991), 31–2.

⁹ Sabino De Sandoli, *Corpus Inscriptionum Crucesignatorum Terrae Sanctae (1099–1291)* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1974), 57.

¹⁰ Fulcher of Chartres, *Fulcheri Carnotensis Historia Hierosolymitana (1095–1127)*, ed. Heinrich Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1913), 589; Fulcher of Chartres, *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem 1095–1127*, trans. Frances S. Ryan, ed. Harold S. Fink (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1960), 214.

¹¹ On interpretation of the Maccabees in the Middle Ages see, together with papers presented in this volume, Elizabeth Lapina, “‘Things Done in a Foreign Land’: Representations of the First Crusade in the Twelfth Century,” Ph.D. dissertation (Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, 2007); Hagen Keller, “*Machabaeorum pugnae*: Zum Stellenwert eines biblischen Vorbilds in Widukinds Deutung der ottonischen Königsherrschaft,” in *Iconologia sacra: Mythos, Bildkunst und Dichtung in der Religions- und Sozialgeschichte Alteuropas: Festschrift für Karl Hauck zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. Hagen Keller and Nikolaus Staubach (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994), 417–437; Jean Dunbabin, “The Maccabees as Exemplars in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries,” in *The Bible in the Medieval World, Essays in Memory of Beryl Smalley*, ed. Katherine Walsh and Diana Wood (Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1985), 31–41; Ian Stuart Robinson, “The Bible in the Investiture Contest: the South German Gregorian Circle,” *The Bible in the Medieval World*, 61–84; Robert L. McGrath, *The Romance of the Maccabees in Medieval Art and Literature*, PhD Dissertation (Princeton: University Press, 1963).

For instance, in the ninth century, Rabanus Maurus, a monk and the archbishop of Mainz, argued that Mattathias (the father of Judas Maccabeus) was a “type” of Christ and his sons signified the community of saints.¹² In the late tenth or early eleventh century, Aelfric, an abbot at the Anglo-Saxon monastery of Eynsham, included the story of Judas Maccabeus in his collection of saints’ *vitae* compiled for the edification of the laity. On the one hand, Aelfric acknowledged that warfare in defense of one’s home and one’s faith, such as the one that Judas Maccabeus had undertaken, was just. On the other hand, he emphasized that spiritual combat is of greater value than actual warfare.¹³

In the aftermath of the First Crusade, there was considerable questioning of old paradigms regarding warfare. Some began to argue that crusaders fought “for Christ” and hence could almost be equated with monks. This revalorization of warfare led, at least in part, to the increasing popularity of the Maccabean warriors. However, many authors writing about the First Crusade found the very outward resemblance between the Maccabees and crusaders disturbing. From their perspective, if the wars of crusaders were both physical and spiritual, the wars of the Maccabees lacked a spiritual dimension, since, of course, they had nothing to do with the Christian faith. As a consequence, many authors tried to undermine the connection between crusaders and Maccabees in one way or another. The present article identifies four different strategies used for this purpose. (1) Caffaro and Fulcher of Chartres attempted to change the meaning of the comparison by emphasizing the similarity of crusaders to Maccabean martyrs rather than Maccabean warriors. (2) Guibert of Nogent dissimilated Christian and Maccabean warriors by underscoring spiritual superiority of the former over the latter. (3) Peter Tudebode and the author of the *Song of Antioch* attempted to cancel the connection entirely, claiming that Maccabean warriors were prototypes not of crusaders, but of their “infidel” enemies. (4) Finally, Orderic Vitalis presented Maccabean warriors as mere historical figures, devoid of any transcendental characteristics.

¹² Rabanus Maurus, *Commentaire in libros Machabaeorum*, PL 109, col. 1125–1256.

¹³ Stuart D. Lee, ed., *Aelfric’s Homilies on Judith, Esther, and The Maccabees* (1999). Electronic book: <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~stuart/kings/> (date of the last consultation: October 1, 2008).

1

Caffaro, a Genoese chronicler of the First Crusade writing in the mid-twelfth century, is a prime example of what seems to be an intentional confusion regarding Maccabean warriors and Maccabean martyrs in crusading sources.¹⁴ He describes angels in heaven receiving some of his compatriots who died during the first siege of Antioch (when crusaders were still on the outside) and giving them a place next to the Maccabees. It is unclear whether Caffaro means the warriors or the martyrs. On the one hand, crusaders obviously resembled the former more closely than the latter. Yet on the other hand, in Christian tradition it was only Maccabean martyrs, not warriors, who were granted a seat in paradise. Also, Caffaro unambiguously calls crusaders “martyrs.”

The same ambiguity or uncertainty as Caffaro’s can be discerned in Fulcher of Chartres’s chronicle, when he asks “In what ways do the Franks differ from the Israelites or Maccabees?” before observing that “Indeed we have seen these Franks in the same regions...suffering dismemberment, crucifixion, flaying, death by arrows or by being rent apart, or other kinds of martyrdom, all for the love of Christ.”¹⁵ On the one hand, it would seem logical for Fulcher to compare the crusaders to Maccabean warriors. As discussed above, in another reference to the Maccabees, he clearly meant the warriors. But in this case, the ways of dying he describes appear to indicate martyrdom. It is true that dismemberment or death by arrows could, in principle, refer either to that or death on the battlefield. Nonetheless, the list taken as a whole – with its inclusion of flaying, crucifixion and renting apart – strongly suggests martyrdom. Crusaders could die in the latter ways only after being taken prisoner by infidels. Thus, it would appear that Fulcher’s comparison is that between crusaders and Maccabean martyrs.

This reading is supported by Fulcher’s observation that crusaders “could not be overcome by threats of temptations, nay rather if the butcher’s sword had been at hand many of us would not have refused martyrdom for the love of Christ,” which points emphatically to passive rather than active resistance, despite a certain ambivalence

¹⁴ Calfarus, *De liberatione civitatum orientis* in *Annali Genovesi di Caffaro e de’ suoi continuatori*, I, ed. L.T. Belgrano (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano, 1890), 103.

¹⁵ Fulcher of Chartres, *Fulcheri Carnotensis Historia Hierosolymitana*, 117; Fulcher of Chartres, *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem*, 58.

connected to the image of the “butcher’s sword.”¹⁶ For Fulcher, then, the crusaders’ army consisted of martyrs (those who were taken prisoner and executed) and potential martyrs or confessors (those who would have been willing to suffer the same fate).

It is possible, however, to combine the two interpretations regarding the meaning of Fulcher’s references to Maccabees. His argument seems to be that crusaders resembled *both* the Maccabean warriors and the Maccabean martyrs, with the latter resemblance trumping the former. Both Caffaro and Fulcher saw the crusaders as “new Maccabees” of a hybrid variety: they resisted actively, with sword in hand, just like Judas Maccabeus, but at the same time they were martyrs, just as the Priest Eleazar, the seven brothers and their mother. In this manner, the connection between the crusaders and Maccabees acquired a new meaning: the deeds of the crusaders surpassed the military exploits of the Maccabean warriors and, at the very least, equaled the spiritual victories of the Maccabean martyrs.

2

Guibert of Nogent, writing in the first decade of the twelfth century, adopted a different strategy in order to distinguish the Maccabean warriors from crusaders. He tried to convey the idea that while the wars of the Maccabees’ were inherently sinful, despite the intervention of the transcendental, those of crusaders were akin to spiritual battles.

The moment when crusaders came closest to resembling the Maccabees was during the Battle of Antioch. According to a number of sources, crusaders were able to emerge victorious thanks to divine intervention. For instance, the anonymous author of *Gesta Francorum*, one of the earliest narratives of the First Crusade, writes that there “appeared from the mountains a countless host of men on white horses, whose banners were all white.” The crusaders realized that “this was the succor sent by Christ, and that the leaders were St. George, St. Mercurius and St. Demetrius.”¹⁷ An obvious parallel to

¹⁶ Fulcher of Chartres, *Fulcheri Carnotensis Historia Hierosolymitana*, 117; Fulcher of Chartres, *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem*, 58.

¹⁷ Anonymous, *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum (The Deeds of the Franks and the other pilgrims to Jerusalem)*, ed. and trans. Rosalind Hill (London: Nelson, 1962), 69.

this and other narratives of celestial intervention in the Battle of Antioch is to be found in the *Second Book of Maccabees*, where there are several similar episodes. In one battle, for instance, “five resplendent men from heaven on horses with golden bridles...led on the Jews” (2 Macc 10:29–30). They “showered arrows and thunderbolts on the enemy till, blinded and disordered, they were utterly bewildered and cut to pieces” (2 Macc 10:30–31). There are several other biblical and non-biblical texts that mention celestial warriors or an entire celestial army. However, the only parallel that chroniclers of the Crusades acknowledge overtly is with the *Second Book of Maccabees*.

William of Malmesbury, who included an extensive narrative of the First Crusade in his *Deeds of the English Kings*, uses the reference to the Maccabees to demonstrate that the miracle of saintly intervention in the Battle of Antioch was credible. After describing the miracle, he adds: “nor can we deny that martyrs have aided Christians, at any rate when fighting in a cause like this, just as angels once gave help to the Maccabees.”¹⁸ According to William, both the Maccabees and crusaders were fighting for a worthy cause and thus deserved divine help. Thus, William’s reference seems to be an example of a conventional use of Jewish heroes as prototypes of medieval warriors.

Although Guibert of Nogent makes a reference to exactly the same passage in the Maccabean narrative, he interpreted it in a remarkably different way.¹⁹ After describing the intervention of saints on the side of crusaders in the Battle of Antioch, Guibert comments: “And if celestial help appeared long ago to the Maccabees fighting for circumcision and the meat of swine, how much more did those who poured out their blood for Christ, purifying the churches and propagating the faith, deserve such help.”²⁰ Like William of Malmesbury, Guibert refers to the Maccabees in order to demonstrate that the miracle of divine aid in battle was credible. Unlike William, however, he also

¹⁸ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, ed. and trans. Roger Aubrey Baskerville Manors *et al.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 638–639.

¹⁹ On Guibert of Nogent and the Maccabees, see Elizabeth Lapina, “Anti-Jewish Rhetoric in Guibert of Nogent’s *Dei Gesta per Francos*,” *Journal of Medieval History* 35 (2009): 239–253. See also Jay Rubenstein, *Guibert de Nogent: Portrait of a Medieval Mind* (London-New York: Routledge, 2002).

²⁰ Guibert de Nogent, *Dei gesta per Francos*, ed. Robert Burchard Constantijn Huygens, vol. 127A, *Corpus Christianorum, Continuato Mediaevalis* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), 240; *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, trans. Robert Levine (Woodbridge-Rochester: Boydell Press, 1997), 110.

emphasizes that crusaders were superior to the Maccabees. According to the chronicler, while the Maccabees fought for material things (for “circumcision and the meat of swine”), crusaders struggled for spiritual matters (above all, “for Christ”).

Thus, in order to convey his point more forcefully, Guibert offers a highly inaccurate summary of the goals of the Maccabean Revolt. According to the biblical text, King Antiochus IV Epiphanes banned circumcision and desecrated altars by sacrificing pigs. Guibert’s statement that the Maccabees fought for “the meat of the swine” does not render justice to these facts. Instead, it belongs to the line of anti-Jewish, often highly derogatory, rhetoric revolving around the interdiction of pork.²¹

3

Firmly associating the Maccabees with the flesh and crusaders with the spirit, as did Guibert of Nogent, was not the most radical way of drawing the line between the two types of warriors. Some authors went a step further, claiming the Maccabees were prototypes not of crusaders, but of their enemies, the “infidels.” The vernacular *Song of Antioch* mentions Judas Maccabeus several times. It claims that he was one of the generals in Kerbogha’s army, fighting against crusaders in the Battle of Antioch. Other generals included the heroes of the Old Testament (Samson, David and Solomon), the rogues of the New Testament (Herod and Pilate) and, ironically, the Maccabees’ archenemy, Antiochus. Thus, instead of following in the footsteps of Judas Maccabeus, crusaders, quite literally, fought against him.²²

This image might in itself be dismissed as the product of confusion proper to “popular” mentality. However, at least one Latin source also presents the Maccabees in a distinctly negative light. Peter Tudebode, writing in the first decade of the twelfth century, includes *Iudas*

²¹ Michel Pastoureau, “L’homme et le porc: une histoire symbolique,” in *Couleurs, images, symboles, études d’histoire et d’anthropologie* (Paris: Léopard d’or, 1989), 237–283; Claudine Fabre-Vassas, *La bête singulière. Les juifs, les chrétiens et le cochon* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994).

²² Jan A. Nelson, *The Old French Crusade Cycle*, vol. 4, *La Chanson d’Antioche* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003), lines 10890–10892, 337.

Machabeus in the list of seventy-five kings who ruled in Antioch.²³ The list clearly resembles that of “infidel” kings opposing crusaders in the *Song of Antioch*. Samson, Solomon, Pilate, and Herod figure in both cases. According to Peter Tudebode’s chronicle, in addition to these biblical figures, Judas Maccabeus shares the honor of having presided over Antioch with, among others, *David hereticus*, *Garbandus impius de Samardandum*, *Satanus*, *Drahonus* and *Impius Telandus*. By associating him with such unsavory characters as “Satan,” the chronicle appears to put the worthiness of Judas Maccabeus himself into question.

4

Orderic Vitalis, the author of *Ecclesiastical History*, most of which was written between 1123 and 1137, represents the fourth strategy for undermining the standard connection between the crusaders and Maccabees. Orderic’s presentation of the Battle of the Field of Blood seems a response to that connection as raised, for instance, by Fulcher in the framework of the Battle of Tall Danith. As discussed above, Fulcher compared crusaders to Maccabees, who frequently won battles regardless of their numerical inferiority. The Battle of the Field of Blood took place just four years after the Battle of Tall Danith; it was also fought relatively close to Antioch and involved the same crusading leader, Prince Roger of Antioch. But as its name suggests, the Battle of the Field of Blood was an unprecedented disaster for crusaders, with Prince Roger killed and his entire army annihilated.

According to Orderic, just before the battle’s beginning, Bernard of Valence, the Patriarch of Antioch, warned Roger against engaging the enemy, begging him to wait for reinforcements. Abandoning the discourse of divinely-sponsored victory of the few over many, the patriarch gave Roger highly practical advice: “Temper your zeal with prudence, valiant duke, and wait for King Baldwin and Joscelin and the other loyal lords who are coming early to our assistance. Rash haste has brought many men to ruin and deprived great princes of

²³ Petrus Tudebodus, *Historia de Hierosolymitano Itinere*, ed. John Hugh Hill and Laurita Lyttleton Hill (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1977), 120. Trans. in Peter Tudebode, *Historia de Hierosolymitano Itinere*, trans. John Hugh Hill and Laurita Lyttleton Hill (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1974), 97.

life and victory.” The Patriarch supported his admonitions by citing historical precedent:

Study ancient and modern histories, and ponder seriously over the fates of some remarkable kings. Call to mind Saul and Josiah and Judas Maccabeus, and the Romans who were defeated by Hannibal at Cannae, and take great care not to drag your subjects with yourself into a disaster of the same kind. Wait for your worthy allies...²⁴

In this case, Orderic refers to Judas Maccabeus together with Saul and Josiah: two relatively obscure Old Testament figures, neither of whom ever profited from any miracles or enjoyed any special status in Christianity. In contrast to the pairing of the Maccabees with Gideon, as in Fulcher’s chronicle, this is a demotion. The common denominator for these three figures is that they have all been defeated and killed in battle.²⁵ The fact that the patriarch also mentions Pagan Romans, defeated in the Battle of Cannae, further underscores Orderic’s desire to present the Maccabees as historical figures. For Orderic, a comparison between Maccabees and crusaders was acceptable, but only as long as it did not involve the transcendental.

5

The Maccabean warriors and crusaders fought their wars on the same terrain, with Jerusalem being the ultimate goal. Both referred to the restoration of sites of worship and the possibility of freely practicing their faith in the city as the aims of their fighting and both profited from a remarkably similar type of miracle: the intervention of celestial agents on the battlefield. Some chroniclers of the First Crusade clearly viewed the resemblance between crusaders and these Jewish warriors from the past with anxiety – the fear being that the Christian warriors would not merely grow to resemble superficially these time-honored models of fighters for faith, but were in fact becoming indistinguishable from the Maccabees or, in other words, were “Judaizing.”

²⁴ Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969–80), 6:107.

²⁵ Saul, together with his three sons, was killed in the battle against the Philistines on Mount Gilboa (1 Samuel 31); Josiah was slain in battle at Meggiddo in Mesopotamia (1 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 35). On the death of Judas Maccabeus, see 1 Macc 9:18.

The anxiety of these medieval authors was made stronger by the fact that at least some of them viewed the Crusades as more than ordinary wars, but rather as a new way for the laity to achieve salvation. In order to demonstrate this, certain chroniclers argued that the crusaders were able to combine spiritual with physical warfare. A comparison with the Maccabees stood in the way of this argument: the wars of the Maccabees could not have been spiritual. Moreover, there existed a long-standing association of Jews with the flesh, its origins traceable to Paul's *Epistles*.²⁶ Many chroniclers thus preferred juxtaposing crusaders and Maccabees to bringing them together.

Yet another factor made comparisons between crusaders and Maccabees even more problematic. The twelfth century was marked by a growing awareness of the presence of a Jewish minority in Western Europe – a development coinciding with an increasing encounter with Muslims, so that the two groups of non-Christians were sometimes considered together.²⁷ Guibert of Nogent, for example, recorded some of the crusaders initiating a massacre of the Jews at home using the following argument: “We wish to attack the enemies of God in the East, after traveling great distances. However, before our very eyes are the Jews and no people is more hostile to God than they are.”²⁸ In this context, some authors clearly considered the representation of Jewish warriors as prototypes of crusaders inappropriate. Their depiction as enemies of the crusaders, on the par with Muslims, made better sense.

It seems, however, that such distaste for the Maccabees did not outlive the twelfth century and several reasons come to mind for this development. First, the Maccabean warriors began to enter the Christian pantheon as a simple result of frequent references and citations. Second, the First Crusade, with its impressive achievements, faded into the past, the ongoing crusading enterprise rather being stamped by

²⁶ Gilbert Dahan, *Les intellectuels chrétiens et les juifs au moyen âge* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1990); David Nirenberg, “The Birth of the Pariah: Jews, Christian Dualism, and Social Science,” *Social Research* 70 (2003): 201–236.

²⁷ Allan Harris Cutler and Helen Elmquist Cutler, *The Jew as Ally of the Muslim* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986); Jeremy Cohen, “The Muslim Connection or the Changing Role of the Jew in High Medieval Theology” in *idem*, *From Witness to Witchcraft. Jews and Judaism in Medieval Christian Thought* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 1996), 141–162.

²⁸ Guibert of Nogent, *Autobiographie*, ed. and trans. Edmond René Labande (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1981), 246–253. English trans. in Guibert of Nogent, *A Monk's Confession*, trans. Paul J. Archambault (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 111.

failure. Crusaders thus no longer strongly resembled the Maccabees – at least the victorious Maccabees – in that they no longer controlled Jerusalem and were frequently defeated on the battlefield. Also, there were no more, or very few, miracles manifest on their behalf. Without any danger of confusion between crusaders and Old Testament Jews, their mention together was no longer potentially scandalous.

In canto XVIII of Dante's *Paradiso*, completed shortly before the author's death in 1321, the narrator meets eight rulers who have been admitted to paradise. The attribute shared by all eight is having defended the "true faith," whether Judaism or Christianity, against "infidels." Among these individuals, the narrator meets Duke Geoffrey of Bouillon, one of the leaders of the First Crusade, and "the great Maccabee" (*alto Maccabeo*), presumably Judas. Clearly, by the fourteenth century, the controversy surrounding the comparisons between Christian and Jewish warriors was a thing of the past. It was no longer disquieting to find a crusader and a Maccabean warrior as neighbors in paradise.

HATE PREACHERS AND RELIGIOUS WARRIORS:
VIOLENCE IN THE *LIBELLI DE LITE* OF THE
LATE ELEVENTH CENTURY

Oliver Münsch

That Old Testament warriors for faith and their reception would play a role in the so called “investiture controversy” is not self-evident. This controversy has frequently been described as having been over the appointment of bishops or between a dogmatic pope (Gregory VII) and a king lacking insight (Henry IV). It has recently also been interpreted as the sign of a powerful upheaval within medieval church and society. The controversy was in any event only superficially about investiture, for in reality it went much deeper, calling time-honored forms of rule into question. In its course, theoretical, ideological, and practical dimensions of hate and violence would repeatedly intermingle. Violent confrontation gradually came to the forefront; extreme forms of propaganda and calls for violence came to play an increasingly important role.¹

Starting in the mid-eleventh century, following a long period of weakness, the Roman Church found itself undergoing a comprehensive process of reform, manifest above all in the growth of papal authority. The struggle against the sale of offices and for priestly celibacy here took center stage. Eventually the reform’s impact, initially felt within the Church itself, came to affect the relationship between the clergy and laity. Especially at issue was the worldly ruler’s authority: among the Roman reformers there was a broad consensus that his

¹ For an overview of the period, see Uta-Renate Blumenthal, “The Papacy, 1024–1122,” in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, ed. David E. Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 4: 8–37; Hanna Vollrath, “The Western Empire under the Salians” in *ibid.*, 38–71; Uta-Renate Blumenthal, *Gregor VII: Papst zwischen Canossa und Kirchenreform* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2000); Gerd Althoff, *Heinrich IV.* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006); Tilman Struve, “Heinrich IV. – Herrscher im Konflikt,” in *Vom Umbruch zur Erneuerung? Das 11. und beginnende 12. Jahrhundert: Positionen der Forschung*, ed. Jörg Jarnut and Matthias Wemhoff (Munich: Fink, 2006), 55–70.

interference in, for instance, episcopal appointments was no longer acceptable.²

Given this context of ecclesiastical reform, a crisis in the relationship between Pope Gregory VII and the German king Henry IV became inevitable. In 1075, a conflict broke out over the appointment of Milan's archbishop, with both the papal and royal sides doing little to avoid a confrontation that was becoming increasingly personal. The conflict escalated through mutual deposition and Henry's excommunication, which led in 1077 to his journey to Canossa and his subsequent act of penance there. The pope justified a renewed ecclesiastical ban on and deposition of Henry three years later. Although he had indeed accepted the king back into the Church at Canossa, he had not actually reinstated him in his royal office. In the pope's view, Henry has been ruled illegitimately.³ However, Henry and his followers were strong

² See Franz-Josef Schmale, "Die Anfänge des Reformpapsttums unter den deutschen und lothringisch-tuscanischen Päpsten von Clemens II. bis Alexander II.," in *Das Papsttum I: Von den Anfängen bis zu den Päpsten in Avignon*, ed. Martin Greschat (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1985), 140–154; Hans Hubert Anton, "Frühe Stufen der Kirchenreform: Tendenzen und Wertungen," in *Sant'Anselmo, Mantova e la lotta per le investiture: Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi (Mantova, 23–24–25 maggio 1986)*, ed. Paolo Golinelli (Bologna: Pàtron, 1987), 241–268. The centralizing tendencies of the papacy are analyzed by Wilfried Hartmann, "Verso il centralismo papale (Leone IX, Niccolò II, Gregorio VII, Urbano II)," in *Il secolo XI: una svolta?*, ed. Cinzio Violante and Johannes Fried (Bologna: Società Ed. Il Mulino, 1993), 99–130.

³ On the Milan conflict see Claudia Zey, "Die Synode von Piacenza und die Konsekration Tedalds zum Erzbischof von Mailand im Februar 1076," *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 76 (1996): 496–509; Olaf Zumhagen, "Tedald von Mailand (1075–1085): Erzbischof ohne civitas," in *Bene vivere in communitate: Beiträge zum italienischen und deutschen Mittelalter: Hagen Keller zum 60. Geburtstag überreicht von seinen Schülerinnen und Schülern*, ed. Thomas Scharff and Thomas Behrmann (Münster: Waxmann, 1997), 3–23. On the conflict's escalation see Carl Erdmann, "Die Anfänge der staatlichen Propaganda im Investiturstreit," *Historische Zeitschrift* 154 (1936): 491–512; Egon Boshof, *Heinrich IV: Herrscher an einer Zeitenwende* (Göttingen: Muster-Schmidt, 1990), 63–79; *idem*, *Die Salier* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2000), 218–235; Uta-Renate Blumenthal, *Der Investiturstreit* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1982), 131ff.; Tilman Struve, "Gregor VII. und Heinrich IV. Stationen einer Auseinandersetzung," in *La riforma Gregoriana e l'Europa: Congresso internazionale Salerno, 20–25 maggio 1985. II.: Comunicazioni* (Rome: Libreria Ateneo Salesiano, 1991), 29–60 (reprint in *Id., Salierzeit im Wandel: Zur Geschichte Heinrichs IV. und des Investiturstreits* [Cologne: Böhlau, 2006, 96–116 and 307–321]); Christian Schneider, *Prophetisches Sacerdotium und heilsgeschichtliches Regnum im Dialog 1073–1077: Zur Geschichte Gregors VII. und Heinrichs IV* (Munich: Fink, 1972); Jörgen Vogel, *Gregor VII. und Heinrich IV. nach Canossa* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1983), 12–183. On the papal argumentation in 1080 see in *Das Register Gregors VII.*, ed. Erich Caspar, vol. 2, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica Epistolae selectae* 2.2, (Berlin: Weidmann, 1955), 484, Reg. VII 14a.

enough to simply ignore the papal measures and nominate their own pope, one Wibertus of Ravenna.

The year 1080 thus marked a turn: Not only was the prospect of a long term peaceful resolution to this conflict blocked, but the immediate nature of the conflict was also transformed into a propagandistic struggle for hegemony over worldly and spiritual power. One of the mutual accusations between pope and king involved the spreading of “false viewpoints” among the people. Everywhere preachers – the appellation “hate preachers” is entirely justified – were vociferously speaking up for their own cause and warning against that of their opponents. Contemporary documents attest to the activities of monks from the Hirsau monastery, who worked for Gregory VII and the ecclesiastical reform.⁴ While documentation of this oral level of the conflict is only indirect, there is nonetheless clear-cut evidence of such dissemination of propaganda. Although this “propaganda phase” has hitherto been inadequately researched, the full extent and impact of the investiture controversy can only be grasped in light of this stage of the conflict.

While searching for historical predecessors and models in the ideological struggle between church and world, some authors of polemical texts turned to antique Judea, presenting their own course as exemplified by the deeds of the Maccabees. The focus in this discussion will be on the patterns of argumentation used by some of these propagandists and thus on the role assigned to the Maccabees in the legitimization of violence as the investiture controversy unfolded.

1

In the controversy’s propaganda, the understanding of the biblical Maccabees tended toward the literal, in contrast to the sort of allegorical approach manifest in the commentary on the Maccabees by Rabanus Maurus. What the polemical literature emphasized was not a spiritual striving meant to be emulated; rather, Judas Maccabeus and

⁴ See already Paul Giseke, *Die Hirschauer während des Investiturstreites* (Gotha: Perthes, 1883), 85 and 125, and more recently Hermann Jakobs, *Die Hirsauer. Ihre Ausbreitung und Rechtsstellung im Zeitalter des Investiturstreites* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1961), 25 and 190.

his comrades were seen as concrete models of the physical struggle against the earthly enemy.⁵

Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida was the first author of such literature to invoke the Maccabees, in the last of the "Three Books against the Simonists" he finished in 1058. In his writing, they were in any case presented from another perspective than in later polemical tracts. He thus first explicated (*Libri III adversus simoniacos* III.18) the difference between heretical and orthodox priests using the Hellenized Jews, on the one hand, and the Maccabees struggling against Antiochus IV, on the other hand, as his example.⁶ He wished to depict the beginnings of simony in this manner; Antiochus here served as the *typus antichristi* whose followers were, in his view, heretics. As proof that Jason was a Simonist⁷ to whom the king sold the high priest's office, Humbert cited two passages from the second book of the Maccabees (2 Macc 4:7–10, 13–14), arguing that Jason was in no way a priest, but rather a sinner and heathen, a fact that could already be seen in his name.⁸

In addition, Humbert referred to the description of the brutal capture of Jerusalem by Antiochus IV (2 Macc 5:14) and described the report at 1 Macc 1:23–24 about the royally induced bloodbath along

⁵ See Rabanus Maurus, *Commentaria in libros Maccabaeorum*, Migne, PL 109, col. 1125–1256. On that work Susanne Wittekind, "Die Makkabäer als Vorbild des geistlichen Kampfes: Eine kunsthistorische Deutung des Leidener Makkabäer-Codex Perizoni 17," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 37 (2003): 47–71. In the tenth century, Widukind of Corvey used the Maccabees as models in his depiction of the battle of Lechfeld; see Lorenz Weinrich, "Tradition und Individualität in den Quellen zur Lechfeldschlacht 955," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 27 (1971): 291–313; Hagen Keller, "Machabeorum pugnae: Zum Stellenwert eines biblischen Vorbilds in Widukinds Deutung der ottonischen Königsherrschaft," in *Iconologia sacra: Mythos, Bildkunst und Dichtung in der Religions- und Sozialgeschichte Alteuropas. Festschrift für Karl Hauck zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. Hagen Keller and Nikolaus Staubach (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994), 417–437.

⁶ See Humberti cardinalis, *Libri III adversus simoniacos*, ed. Friedrich Thaner, MGH. Libelli de lite [henceforth Ldl] (Hanover: Hahn, 1891), 1: 220–221; more recently: Elaine G. Robison, *Humberti Cardinalis Libri tres adversus simoniacos: A Critical Edition with an Introductory Essay and Notes* (Princeton: University Press, 1972), 320. See also Margit Dischner, *Humbert von Silva Candida: Werk und Wirkung des lothringischen Reformmönches* (Neuried: Ars Una, 1996).

⁷ *Siquidem typus antichristi Antiochus sacerdotium Iudaeorum Iasoni typum Symonis magi praeferenti vendidit primus* (MGH Ldl 1: 220, lines 38–39).

⁸ *Unde idem Iason non sacerdos, sed impius arguitur, quo nomine paganus proprie ostenditur* (*ibid.*, 221, lines 5–6).

with the plundering and the looting of the Temple.⁹ In highly consistent fashion, he interpreted Jason's punishment (2 Macc 5:8–10) as the comeuppance for his simony. And he did not neglect the looting of the Temple treasure by Jason's successor Menelaus.¹⁰ Jason's behavior also functioned as an introduction to the cardinal's own thoughts, enriched by citations from 1 and 2 Maccabees, over the despicable nature of simony in his text's following chapter (III.19).¹¹

All told, Humbert's observations had one goal: to demonstrate, through recourse to biblical history, the perils of simony in his own time. What was at stake, in the end, was demonstrating historically that simonists could not carry out any valid ecclesiastical consecration. Jason here served as the means to an end for Humbert, for his was the first verifiable case of simony. In his writing, the Maccabees themselves remained in the background. Nevertheless, they were already implicitly present as models; rather than collaborating in the actions of the Hellenized Jews, they stood up against them.

Shortly after Humbert's polemic appeared, another author took up the Maccabean example. Peter Damian, rhetorician, monk, and Cardinal Bishop of Ostia, was in fact Humbert's sharpest opponent within the reformed Roman Church. Although far less radical when it came to dogmatic questions and church politics, in his use of the Maccabean model he would reveal himself as a pioneer of an extreme point of view that would come to dominate the discussion. In his letters, which

⁹ *Ibid.*, 221 lines 6–16. Whether the (previously deposed) high priest Jason actually attempted "the transformation of Jerusalem into a Greek polis," as Stephanie von Dobbeler suggests in *Die Bücher 1/2 der Makkabäer* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1997), 16, is debated by researchers. See most recently Peter Franz Mittag, *Antiochos IV. Epiphanes: Eine politische Biographie* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2006), 235–247, who interprets the Hellenization measures "as an effort by parts of the Jewish population to gain a connection to the Hellenized areas of the Seleucid empire with simultaneous retention of their Jewish identity." (Christian Körner, review of "Antiochos IV. Epiphanes," by Peter Franz Mittag, <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/2006-4-121>). Mittag concludes that Antiochus did not try for any systematic Hellenization of the Jews although he showed little understanding of their religious feelings.

¹⁰ See MGH Ldl 1: 221, lines 33–40 and *ibid.*, lines 40–43, with a reference to the punishment of the *venditor* Antiochus in 2 Macc 9:9. Humbert here consciously evokes the "typical" death of the blasphemer through decay and worms.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 221, line 44; 223, line 38. With the citations from 1 Macc 4:42–52, 57–58, which contain the narrative of the temple-purification, Humbert argues that what was polluted and desecrated by the heretics has to be purified and newly sanctified by the pious (in this respect he cites *ibid.*, 222, lines 28–36 as well as the parallel passage at 2 Macc 10:3–6, 8).

would exert great influence on both the polemical literature and contemporary church law, Damian frequently worked with citations from the books of the Maccabees. In Letter 117, written after 1064, he even ascribed more value to the model of dying for faith than to preaching to the instructive or transformative word.¹²

Although this enthusiastic assessment of martyrdom is unique in Damian's writing,¹³ it set the stage for the propaganda of the two decades following 1080. In this period, polemicists increasingly pleaded for a violent struggle against their opponents. The legal expression that theme would take is manifest, for instance, in the codex written at the Frankenthal monastery (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 2213), which contains a number of polemical texts treating the themes of simony, excommunication, and the use of force. One such excerpt is from Damian's 87th letter, once more demonstrating its value for subsequent polemics. We here find the following rhetorical question:

If recourse to iron weapons for the sake of the faith through which the entire Church lives is forbidden, why do rows of armored warriors zealously grasp at swords for the sake of worldly things?

In other words, if violence is already used on behalf of worldly things, how much more permissible is armed struggle for faith!¹⁴

¹² *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Kurt Reindel, vol. 4, MGH. Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit [henceforth BdK] (Munich: MGH, 1989), 3: 319.

¹³ In *Epistola* 145 to the Roman city prefect Cencius, January 7, 1067, Damiani made the following request: *Iudae quoque Machabei te pedisequum exhibe, qui ad hoc non cessabat, et fulmineus in hostes irruere, et tumentia tyrannorum colla gladiis ultoribus obtruncare, ut contribules suos ab imminente servientium barbarorum cede protegeret* (*ibid.*, 531). But in the sentence that follows, it becomes clear that the battle referred to here did not involve military confrontation but action on behalf of the weak and oppressed as well as a spiritual battle for justice and the common good.

¹⁴ *Si pro fide, qua universalis vivit ecclesia in is, qui ferrea corripit arma conceditur, quomodo pro terrenis ac transitoriis aecclesie facultatibus loricate acies in gladios debachantur*. *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani. Teil 2* (MGH. BdK 4.2: 513). This is also found in Wido of Ferrara, *De scismate Hildebrandi*, where it is presented as a passage from Hieronymus (cf. MGH Ldl 1: 554, lines 30–32). Another passage in the same codex recommends as follows: *Qui malos percutit in eo, quod mali sunt, et habet vasa interfectionis, minister est domini*. The phrasing is based on Hieronymus's *Commentarii in Hiezechielem* (III 9); see Sophronius Eusebius Hieronymus, *Opera. Pars I, vol. 4: Commentariorum in Hiezechielem libri XIV*, ed. Franciscus Glorie (Turnhout: Brepols, 1964), 103. Among the polemical texts, only Sigeberts of Gembloux' *Epistola Leodicensium adversus Paschalem papam* took up the citation (MGH Ldl (Hanover: Hahn, 1892), 2: 452, line 40). It is frequently present in the canonic realm and was clearly widespread in the reform period as in Burchard of Worms, *Decretum* VI, 42;

2

In the writing that emerged from the Gregorian side, the equation of followers of Henry IV with heretics paved the way for violent struggle against them. On the side of the king's defenders, the scholar Wenrich of Trier wrote his *Epistola*, an open letter to Gregory shortly before the Roman Lenten synod of 1080. Commissioned by the Bishop of Verdun, the letter contained several main points of complaint regarding the enduring conflict: the mobilization of laypeople against non-celibate clerics, the support for violence, and the deposition of Henry's and the installation of a counter-king.¹⁵ At the letter's end, Wenrich reiterated the idea already expressed at 1 Macc 5:62 that Israel was saved by the Maccabees.¹⁶ With reference to this specific passage, he argued that if it were not accepted practice for the king to hand out episcopal offices, then the Old Testament would not refer to Israel's rulers expelling priests and replacing them with others. Even the Maccabees clearly did not consider it a mistake for kings to hand out priestly offices, for they even agreed to accept the high priesthood from alien, godless kings such as Demetrius I and Alexander Balas.¹⁷ Wenrich thus drew on the

the *Collectio V librorum* (Cod. Vatikan, Vat. Lat. 1339) IV, 95; the *Collectio S. Mariae Novellae* 121.13; Deusdedit, *Collectio canonum* IV 220; *Liber de vita christiana* X 76; Bonizo of Sutri, *Liber de vita christiana* X 76; and in the collections of Ivo of Chartres (*Collectio tripartita* III.20, 43; *Decretum* X 114; *Panormia* VIII.51).

¹⁵ MGH Ldl 1, 280–299. On Wenrich see Franz-Reiner Erkens, *Die Trierer Kirchenprovinz im Investiturstreit* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1987), 128ff.

¹⁶ MGH Ldl 1: 298, 2–3 (*viri gloriosi, per quos salus facta est in Israel*); the reference here is to 1 Macc 5:62 (*per quorum manum salus data est Israel*). According to this interpretation, the Maccabees' success was not based on military tactics but rather on being "chosen by God to save Israel" (von Dobbeler, *Die Bücher 1/2 der Makkabäer*, 86). Notably, being saved here not only means from present dangers but has a pronouncedly eschatological dimension as well (see *ibid.*, 87).

¹⁷ MGH Ldl 1: 298, lines 5–7. Similarly to Wenrich, the author of the *Tractatus de investitura episcoporum* of 1109 appealed to the fact that *a regibus Iudeis et gentilibus sacerdotes investituras acceperunt in Iudaismo*, as is indicated in the books of the kings and Maccabees. Cf. Jutta Krimm-Beumann, "Der Traktat *De investitura episcoporum* von 1109," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 33 (1977): 78. The manner in which the phenomenon of monarchical influence on and payments to the church could be given a positive twist by reformists was demonstrated by Cardinal Deusdedit: in his *Libellus contra invasores et symoniacos* of 1097, he noted that even heathen kings bestowed sumptuous gifts on the Jerusalem Temple. The reference here was to 2 Macc 3:2–3 (not to 4:2–3, as erroneously indicated in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* edition) and included a warning to Christian rulers to do at least the same (MGH Ldl 2: 344, lines 7–12).

Maccabean example to justify the traditional practice of investiture of the German king.

The erstwhile wandering preacher Manegold of Lautenbach now responded at length to Wenrich's interpretation in an extensive, strictly Gregorian polemical treatise, *Liber ad Gebehardum*,¹⁸ whose arguments were both penetrating and radical. After living as a canon in Lautenbach, Manegold later moved to the Augustinian canon chapter in Alsatian Marbach, where his preaching was highly influential. Appearing in 1085, *Liber ad Gebehardum* addressed all the central questions at work in the reform, defending the pope's actions and presenting an intense polemic aimed at all worldly rulers as well as bishops and abbots who remained true to the king.¹⁹ In his rebuttal of Wenrich, Manegold referred to two verses from 1 Macc (2:23–24)²⁰ while briefly discussing conflicts of the Jews and later the Christians with heathen opponents. Many wars, he observed, had taken place on account of heathen hostility, so that the Church considered those killed in such struggles to be martyrs.²¹ Although he did not here directly designate the Maccabees as such, he tied them as closely as possible to the Christian martyrs, naming them in the same breath. Later in his treatise, Manegold explicitly refuted the views of Wenrich of Trier regarding the Maccabees.²² Jonathan, brother of Judas Maccabeus, gained the high priest's office not through the worldly ruler, he emphasized, but through agreement of the Jews themselves (*ex consensu populi*).

¹⁸ Previously, in a letter probably written in 1081, archbishop Gebhard of Salzburg, the leading Gregorian north of the Alps, spoke up against the interpretation in the form of a reference to Antiochus's plundering of the temple (1 Macc 1:23): bishops were not allowed to obey or support a worldly ruler claiming God's sanctuaries for himself and plundering their treasures. See MGH Ldl 1: 278, lines 10–38 (chap. 16).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 300–430. On the person and work of Manegold, see Wilfried Hartmann, "Manegold von Lautenbach und die Anfänge der Frühscholastik," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 26 (1970): 47–149, esp. 122ff.; Pietro de Leo, "Ricerche sul *Liber ad Gebehardum* di Manegoldo di Lautenbach," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 10 (1974): 112–153; Horst Fuhrmann, "'Volkssouveränität' und 'Herrschaftsvertrag' bei Manegold von Lautenbach," in *Festschrift für Hermann Krause*, ed. Sten Gagnér (Cologne: Böhlau, 1975), 21–42; *idem*, "Zur Biographie des Manegold von Lautenbach," in *Ovidio Capitani: Quaranta anni per la storia medioeval*, ed. Maria Consiglia De Matteis (Bologna: Pàtron, 2003), 2: 37–62.

²⁰ *Et, ut cessavit loqui verba haec, accessit quidam Iudaeus in omnium oculis sacrificare super aram in Modiin secundum iussum regis. Vidit Matthatias et zelatus est, et contremuerunt renes eius; et attulit iram secundum iudicium et insiliens trucidavit eum super aram.*

²¹ As an example he named Saint Oswald; see MGH Ldl 1: 399, lines 7–14.

²² *Ibid.*, 406–409.

Jonathan and his brother Simon were thus not guilty of simony or of being mere tools of a heathen ruler.²³

In the conflict between Wenrich and Manegold, the dominant themes were simony and investiture. But Manegold understood how to present the idea of resistance against opponents within the Church's notions of "just" resistance as a struggle for proper faith. He could here be certain of remaining entirely true to the line of Gregory VII, who had recently died. From the papal perspective, every Christian had a duty to oppose violently – if left with no alternative – anything threatening the Church. In the eyes of the Church's reformers, the worldly ruler was duty-bound to obedience and submission to the pope. Since the loyalty oath of vassals and other subjects was tied to the presumption of just rule, a king whose government deteriorated into tyranny could no longer be legitimate.²⁴ In this regard, Manegold maintained a standpoint that had become topical through the struggle of the Saxons against Henry IV in the 1070s.²⁵

Manegold, the propagandist, saw the use of violence not only against the king himself but also against his followers together with the confiscation of their property as justified by many biblical passages, by Church council decisions, and by the writings of Church fathers. He even believed the killing of Henry IV's followers was justifiable. Inasmuch as they maintained their errors and stubbornly refused attempts

²³ *Ibid.*, 408, line 3. Later in the same chapter, Manegold commented on the significance of the Maccabees, introducing several citations to clarify the approach of the Church Fathers to these texts (*ibid.*, 408, line 20–409, line 3). In this regard see Jean Dunbabin, "The Maccabees as exemplars in the tenth and eleventh centuries," in *The Bible in the Medieval World. Essays in Memory of Beryl Smalley*, ed. Katherine Walsh and Diana Wood (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1985), 38–40.

²⁴ See Tilman Struve, "Das Problem der Eideslösung in den Streitschriften des Investiturstreites," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte. Kanonistische Abteilung* 75 (1989): 122–126 (reprint in *idem, Salierzeit im Wandel: Zur Geschichte Heinrichs IV. und des Investiturstreits* [Cologne: Böhlau, 2006]: 200–212 and 376–387).

²⁵ Manegold's reasoning amounts to the following: to the extent warnings from the church are ineffective, worldly force should be applied (MGH Ldl 1: 369–370). His same argument in more detail: *luce clarius constat eos, qui nunc contempta omni ecclesiastica disciplina non unum quemlibet episcopum, sed episcopum episcoporum presumunt contempnere, nec ecclesiam tantum sollicitare, sed ipsam sacrosanctam Romanam ecclesiam, capud et matrem omnium ecclesiarum, contendunt exterminare, rationali progressionem, immo inevitabili necessitate per exterius potestates aliquomodo a tam profana presumptione absterrendos, ut tantae pervicaciae immanitas, que ecclesiastica mansuetudine corrigi non patitur, ne posteris similiter rebellandi exemplar existat, quoquomodo retundatur* (*ibid.*, 370, lines 4–11).

at improvement, in other words, behaved like heretics, the imperative to love one's enemies did not apply to them.²⁶ In his view the principal issue was a just war waged on behalf of the Church and the pope.²⁷

In his *Liber canonum contra Heinricum IV*, also completed in 1085, Manegold's teacher, Bernard of Hildesheim, took the final step towards portraying the Maccabees as martyrs. In commenting on the question of whether there was a right or even duty to resist the Seleucid king, Bernard referred to those Jews who refused to fight on the Sabbath and who were killed as a result, pointing to the relevant passage in 1 Macc (2:32–38).²⁸ This represents the first explicit mention in the polemical literature of the Maccabees as martyrs for their faith.

In any event, Bernard focused solely on the Maccabees' readiness for self-sacrifice and thus could not recommend any simple imitation of their actions. Although he likewise viewed the Gregorians as martyrs,²⁹ in their own situation they were not meant to surrender to Henry IV without a fight. Basically, Bernard here tacitly followed the approach of Mattathias, who endorsed armed struggle in all circumstances.³⁰ In general, his polemic appealed to Gregorian steadfastness and cohesion. When he indicated that ultimately they were even ready to suffer martyrdom,³¹ this did not signify any sense of his cause being lost. Not earthly victory but the prospect of eternal reward and the attainment of holiness in the worldly context of succumbing and forfeiting one's life to a tyrant stood at the center of his thinking. For Bernhard, the question of guilt was already answered before it was posed. The conflict with the Church was incontrovertibly caused by Henry IV, the worldly ruler. Guilt and injustice were thus his burden, not that of the

²⁶ See esp. chap. 38 of the *Liber ad Gebehardum* (376–7).

²⁷ In addition Manegold equated the battle for the pope with that for the fatherland (*ibid.*, 377, lines 18–22).

²⁸ *Et cucurrerunt post illos multi, et deprehendentes eos applicaverunt contra eos et constituerunt adversus eos proelium in die sabbatorum et dixerunt ad eos: Usque hoc nunc! Exite et facite secundum verbum regis et vivetis. Et dixerunt: Non exhibimus neque faciemus verbum regis, ut polluamus diem sabbatorum. Et concitaverunt adversus eos proelium. Et non responderunt eis nec lapidem miserunt in eos nec oppilaverunt loca occulta dicentes: Moriamur omnes in simplicitate nostra, et testes erunt super nos caelum et terra quod iniuste perditis nos. Et insurrexerunt in eos in bello sabbatis; et mortui sunt ipsi et uxores eorum et filii eorum et pecora eorum usque ad mille animas hominum.* See MGH Ldl 1: 482, lines 2–7.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 483, lines 18–23.

³⁰ See 2 Macc 2:39–41.

³¹ Thus MGH Ldl 1: 499, line 43–500, line 2.

Church, which was simply defending itself.³² Fighting for a just cause and certain of eternal salvation, the Gregorians did not need to fear the *Nero nostri temporis*.³³

3

The Italian bishop Bonizo of Sutri likewise referred directly to the Maccabees. Appearing in 1086, his polemic, *Liber ad amicum*, offered a detailed account of contemporary events. At one point in the book Bonizo compared Erlembald, leader of the pataria, who had been a “brave soldier of God” (*miles Dei fortissimus*), to Judas Maccabeus;³⁴ at a later point, he cited the lamentation for Judas (1 Macc 9:21),³⁵ transferring it to Erlembald, whose death had been lamented by all orthodox believers from Rome to the coast of the Channel.³⁶

At the end of his book, Bonizo addressed the question of whether Christians were allowed to engage in armed struggle for the truth. His intention here was to present those he was addressing with the threat to the Church emanating from Henry IV and the anti-pope, and spur them to battle. Bonizo thus concluded that if a Christian had ever been allowed to fight for something with weapons then battling opponents with all conceivable weapons was now also permissible.³⁷

³² It was no accident that the term *martyrium*, which Bernhard applied to his own followers, appeared in this context (*ibid.*, 509, line 39). He then acknowledged that for the sake of spreading the truth he and the others had decided to fearlessly offer resistance to the point of death (*ibid.*, 513, lines 12–13).

³³ *Ibid.*, 513, line 18. The Gregorian Placidus of Nonantula, author of *Liber de honore ecclesiae* (a treatise in church law appearing in 1111) likewise placed the Maccabees in the rank of martyrs, tying self-sacrifice for faith with that for paternal law. See *Machabaei vero beati martyres pro patriis legibus mori non recusarunt* (MGH Ldl 2: 637, lines 33–34, chap. 168 of the *Liber de honore ecclesiae*). – On the anti-Gregorian side, the *Gesta Romanae ecclesiae* waited with its own citations and paraphrases from 1 Macc (initially 1 Macc 10:20–21; later in more detail the three passages 1 Macc 10:15–21, 1 Macc 11:19–27 and 11:57–59).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 599, lines 3–4. In his look back on the Synod of Sutri (1046) Bonizo referred to 2 Macc 4:4: *considerans Onias periculum contentionis et Apollonium Menesthei, ducem Coelesyriae et Phoenicis, augentem malitiam Simonis* (MGH Ldl 1: 585, lines 3–4). Here the Roman church, in the form of Archdeacon Petrus, is described as seeking help and support from Henry III, as did the Jew Onias at the Seleucid court in any event fruitlessly.

³⁵ ...et dixerunt: *Quomodo cecidit potens, qui salvum faciebat populum Israel!*

³⁶ See MGH Ldl 1: 605, lines 14–15.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 618, lines 10–11.

An effort actually emerged within the Church's reform movement to stylize Bonizo himself into a martyr. According to the chronicler Bernold of Constance, in 1089 the bishop had been taken prisoner during violent confrontations in Sutri; his enemies then mutilated his nose, ears, and tongue,³⁸ rendering him a martyr.³⁹ Although the precise sequence of events can be challenged historically, the effect of Bernold's account on his contemporaries can scarcely be exaggerated. Clearly hovering behind it is Bonizo's role as an emphatic representative of extreme Gregorianism. It is worth noting that Bonizo had fallen into strong disfavor in his own cathedral city through his actions and public sermons.⁴⁰

Bonizo's comparison of Erlembald with Judas Maccabeus followed a schema that also enjoyed a certain popularity outside the polemic literature. For the historian Adam of Bremen, the Abodrite prince Gottschalk, who hoped to found a Christian Slavic empire on the Elbe – and who was killed by heathen opponents in 1066 – was “our Maccabee” (*noster Maccabeus*).⁴¹ In Bernold's chronicle, the mortally wounded anti-king Rudolf of Rheinfelden was praised as a second Maccabee” (*alter Machabaeus*), who fell in the service of St. Peter or, put more concretely, that of Pope Gregory VII.⁴² In this manner the southern German opposition to Henry IV finally had its martyr and it worked to conserve this image of Rudolf. Addressing the anti-king as a

³⁸ *Die Chroniken Bertholds von Reichenau und Bernolds von Konstanz 1054–1100*, ed. Ian Stuart Robinson, vol. 14, MGH. Scriptores rerum Germanicum, n.s. (Hanover: Hahn, 2003), 477 (*ad ann.* 1089).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, *martirio coronatur*. For a long time, this formed the basis for researchers believing that Bonizo died from wounds in 1089.

⁴⁰ See Olaf Zumhagen, *Religiöse Konflikte und kommunale Entwicklung: Mailand, Cremona, Piacenza und Florenz zur Zeit der Pataria* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2001), 169; Pierre Racine, *Plaisance du X^{ème} à la fin du XIII^{ème} siècle: Essai d'histoire urbaine* (Paris: Champion, 1980), 1: 220–221.

⁴¹ Magistri Adam Bremensis, *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae Pontificum* (III 50), in *Quellen des 9. und 11. Jahrhunderts zur Geschichte der hamburgischen Kirche und des Reiches*, ed. and trans. Werner Trillmich and Rudolf Buchner (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2000), 390.

⁴² Bernold, *Chronik ad annum 1080*, 425–426. Bernd Schneidmüller, “Canossa und der harte Tod der Helden,” in *Vom Umbruch zur Erneuerung? Das 11. und beginnende 12. Jahrhundert: Positionen der Forschung*, ed. Jörg Jarnut and Matthias Wemhoff (Munich: Fink, 2006), 117–118, points out that Rudolf's death represented the first death in battle of a king in the struggle for the crown of the East Franconian-German empire: “The Bernold chronicle read applied this tragedy back into to the Old Testament book of the Maccabees” (*ibid.*, 118).

“holy victim of war” (*sacra victima belli*), the inscription on his ledger in the Merseburg cathedral can thus be understood as propaganda.⁴³

Even after the investiture controversy was over, the Maccabees continued to represent exemplary warriors against unjust rule in published writing tied to the reformist Church.⁴⁴ In the twelfth century, this perspective was shared by Canon Regular Gerhoch of Reichersberg,

⁴³ See Berthold Hinz, *Das Grabdenkmal Rudolfs von Schwaben. Monument der Propaganda und Paradigma der Gattung* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1996), 31–34, 38–41, and 50–51; Thomas Zotz, “Merseburg, Sachsen und das Königtum Rudolfs von Schwaben,” in *Zwischen Kathedrale und Welt: 1000 Jahre Domkapitel Merseburg, Aufsätze*, ed. Holger Kunde (Petersberg: Imhof, 2005), 68–69. In his epitaph Baldwin I of Jerusalem (died in 1118) is himself described as a “second Maccabeus”: *Hic iacet inclitus dux Godefridus de Bulion, qui totam istam terram acquisivit cultui christiano, cuius anima regnet cum Christo, Amen. Rex Balduinus, Iudas alter Machabeus, spes patriae, vigor ecclesiae, virtus utriusque, quem formidabant, cui dona tributa ferebant Cedar et Aegyptus, Dan ac homicida Damascus, proh dolor! in modico clauditur hoc tumulo*. See Elias Bickerman, *Der Gott der Makkabäer: Untersuchungen über Sinn und Ursprung der makkabäischen Erhebung* (Berlin: Schocken, 1937), 37, no. 2. Also noteworthy is Gottschalk’s continuation of Siebert of Gembloux’s *Gesta abbatum Gemblacensium*; in chap. 73 it offers the epitaph of Abbot Liethard (1092–1115), with its own comparison with Judas Maccabeus: *Abbas Lithardus, veluti Judas Machabeus, Dux bonus ut Josue praefuit aeclesiae. Pro qua bella, minas tulit et convitia multa; Nec tamen in stadio destitit a bravio. Per tot sudores, vir fortis, Marthaque sollers Cuncta ministravit fratribus, ut potuit. Defessus tandem, terrena negotia spernens, Elegit partem Magdalenae parilem. Quam sibi ne tollas, qui gratis singula donas, Qui bonus es solus, huic miserere Deus* (*Gesta Abbatum Gemblacensium*, Migne, PL 160, col. 642).

⁴⁴ See also Bickerman, *Der Gott der Makkabäer*, 37. On the new interest in the Maccabees in historiography of the crusades, see Christoph Auffarth, *Irdische Wege und himmlischer Lohn: Kreuzzug, Jerusalem und Fegefeuer in religionswissenschaftlicher Perspektive* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 125–128 (the Maccabees as models for the crusaders in the reports of Raymond d’Aguilers and Guibert of Nogent) and 132–133 (the undocumented reference by Pope Urban II to the Maccabees in his crusading sermon in Clermont). Urban included a number of citations from I Macc in at least one of his crusading sermons, introducing Mattathias, “father of the holy Maccabees” (*sanctorum progenitorem Machabaeorum*); see Urbani II Papae, *Sermones II*, Migne, PL 151 col. 569–570. – As noted in the prologue of his *Historia Hierosolymitana*, Fulcher of Chartres did not wish to compare the crusade of the Franconians with the deeds effectuated by God through the nation of Israel or the Maccabees; nevertheless his view of that crusade was basically on the same level, particularly since many thousand of martyrs were involved. See Fulcheri Carnotensis *Historia Hierosolymitana* (1095–1127), ed. Heinrich Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg: Winter, 1913), 116–117. – In II. 54 Fulcher described the battles for the crusaders’ city of Antioch in 1115, in which the Antiochians were victorious despite having considerably less men. Fulcher used this fact to recall the Maccabees (*ibid.*, 589). The historical Maccabees and their battles are mentioned in III 30 (*ibid.*, 712). – In chap. 7 of his *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, Raymond d’Aguilers indicated that if it would not be considered presumptuous, he would value the battles of Bohemund of Tarent even more highly than Judas Maccabeus’s revolt (*Le Liber de Raymond d’Aguilers*, ed. John Hugh Hill and Laurita L. Hill [Paris: Geuthner, 1969], 53).

who compared Henry IV with Antiochus IV when looking back at the previous century's events in his *De investigatione antichristi* (I.15–16). The relevant chapter of his book was thus duly headed “On the Situation of the Church at the time of Henry IV and how it corresponds to the Situation of and Measures taken by Antiochus.”⁴⁵ In chapter 19, we likewise read how after many fruitless warnings, Gregory VII was forced to excommunicate the king:⁴⁶

Like a second Maccabeus, he himself dispatched the [excommunicative] sword, in order to at least discomfit the sinners, even if he could not improve them, so that it did not seem as if he was sparing and agreeing with them through silence on the part of the sword of God's word, and as if injustice could spread out unhindered.

Here the pope himself emerged as a second Judas Maccabeus who, although not battling with a *gladius materialis*, was nonetheless doing so with a *gladius spiritualis*.

The Maccabees were presented as models for resistance against schismatics with particular concision in another work of Gerhoch, *De quarta vigilia noctis*, where we read as follows:⁴⁷

But when they [= the opponents] do not serve Christ but rather Antiochus, the antichrist within the spirit, and attack the city of Jerusalem, which is to say the holy church..., then in order to resist this injustice fighters are needed who resemble the Maccabees.

In the conflict over investiture, polemicists like Manegold of Lautenbach pleaded for the use of military force and the killing of those who thought differently. Bonizo responded entirely positively to the

⁴⁵ See MGH Ldl (Hanover: Hahn, 1897), 3: 321–323: *De statu ecclesie temporibus Heinrici IIII, quomodo temporibus et actis Antiochi congruat*.

⁴⁶ *Itaque... misit et ipse velut alter Machabeus gladium, quo etsi non corrigeret, saltem perturbaret iniquos, ne forte gladio verbi Dei parcens tacendo consensisse videretur et libere grassaretur iniquitas* (*ibid.*, 326, lines 15–18).

⁴⁷ *Verum cum idem ipsi non Christo, sed spiritali Antiocho antichristo famulantes civitatem Ierusalem, videlicet sanctam ecclesiam, impugnant..., tunc necessarii sunt Machabeorum consimiles milites iniquitati huic obsistentes* (*ibid.*, 516, lines 2–7). – In Gerhoch's *Epistola ad Innocentium papam missa quid distet inter clericos seculares et regulares*, in a disputation between a worldly cleric and a canon regular, the latter states the following: *Nos autem cum Matathia legem potius quam regem debemus audire* (*ibid.*, 207, lines 20–21). In the early twelfth century, the Maccabees emerged as models against the antichrist in Hugo of St-Victor; see Auffarth 2002, 130–131. Auffarth points to a pictorial representation of the Maccabees contained in a passionate from the Zwiefalten reform monastery dating from 1125–1130 (Codex Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Cod. hist. 2° 415, fol. 56').

question of whether a Christian was allowed to fight for the truth with weapons, a position also held by Pope Gregory VII himself. Strikingly, it was almost exclusively Gregorians who took the last step towards legitimizing the active struggle against their opponents. They did so while the followers of Henry IV. maintained their standpoint, complaining about the bloodshed, and failed to develop a concept of how to use violence.

Alongside the plea for armed struggle, the contemporary texts contain a gesture toward martyrdom grounded in the conviction of fighting for divine justice and signaling a readiness to die for eternal reward. The Maccabees here played an important role, with the propagandists repeatedly presenting them as models, since they died for their religious faith.

But in the end, what was at stake in the investiture conflict was not so much the persuasiveness of an ideology but, to a high degree, concrete power – more precisely, the retention of power by the king versus the accretion of power by the reformed church. If, following Niklas Luhmann, we see the essence of power as lying “in the structures and processes of complexity-reduction that have to be presumed if human communication is to become at all structurally relevant,”⁴⁸ namely, as a medium for communication, then symbolization counts among the necessary elements of power-formation.⁴⁹ Within the realm of propaganda, this symbolization takes the form of metaphors and comparisons. For this reason, Klaus Schreiner’s general observation regarding war applies to the conflicts of the late eleventh century in particular:⁵⁰

Exaggeration becomes an imperative of the higher goal. After all, what especially counts is to furnish war-goals with legitimacy formulas awakening enthusiasm among those affected. The worst the opponent’s atrocities, the brighter one’s own blamelessness and integrity shines.

⁴⁸ Niklas Luhmann, *Macht* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1988), 168.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁵⁰ Klaus Schreiner, “Texte, Bilder, Rituale. Fragen und Erträge einer Sektion auf dem Deutschen Historikertag (8. bis 11. September 1998),” in *Bilder, Texte, Rituale. Wirklichkeitsbezug und Wirklichkeitskonstruktion politisch-rechtlicher Kommunikationsmedien in Stadt- und Adelsgesellschaften des späten Mittelalters*, ed. Klaus Schreiner and Gabriela Signori (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2000), 7.

And as it happens, the propagandists of the investiture conflict could hardly emphasize their opponents' viciousness more effectively than by aligning their own side with martyrs and taking them as a model.

When it comes to the Gregorians' self-interpretation as warriors for faith, a sober assessment points less to a similarity with the Maccabees than to an inversion of the biblical model. Where the Maccabees reacted to violent persecution, the situation was different in the eleventh century: when turning against apostates in their own ranks, in other words, Nicolaitian and Simonistic priests, the Gregorians were not the persecuted party but were rather doing the persecuting. Of course, the Gregorians were themselves convinced they were dying as witnesses of true faith. In their ideology killing and dying for faith belonged closely together. The Maccabean struggle thus emerged as a model for those Christian fighters claiming a martyr's role for themselves.

The enduring influence of Old Testament models and actors of the Middle Ages (and beyond) was grounded in this ambivalence between martyrdom and war. Two main characteristics can here be perceived in the investiture conflict: on the one hand, there is a strikingly selective approach to the Maccabees: only individual facets of their deeds were suited for propaganda. On the other hand, the Maccabean example was constantly situationally anchored or instrumentalized. Symptomatic of the conflict's intensity was the propagandists' recourse to the starkest examples at their disposal. This recourse was especially effective because the Maccabees were no longer simply understood as martyrs but also as holy warriors.

THE MACCABEES AS ROLE MODELS IN THE GERMAN ORDER

Henrike Lähnemann

In texts from the 13th to the 15th century used in the German Order, the Maccabees, especially Judas Maccabeus, figure prominently as forerunners of the Teutonic Knights on a historical, typological and allegorical level. The main focus of this paper will be on how the *Maccabäer*,¹ the most comprehensive vernacular version of the Books of the Maccabees ever prepared,² adapts that material for the Order.³ The framework for understanding the way in which biblical epic is presented is provided by the prologues to the *Statuten des Deutschen Ordens*, in which the Maccabees occupy a key position:⁴

¹ *Das Buch der Maccabäer in mitteldeutscher Bearbeitung*, ed. Karl Helm, vol. 233, Bibliothek des literarischen Vereins in Stuttgart (Tübingen: Laupp, 1904).

² The only parallel is a French verse paraphrase: *La chevalerie de Judas Macchabee de Gautier de Belleperche (et de Pieros du Riés)*: Ms. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Hamilton 363, ed. Jean Robert Smeets (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1991).

³ For the use of the Maccabees as an example in the historical writing of the German Order, see Mary Fischer, "The Books of the Maccabees and the Teutonic Order," *Crusades* 4 (2005): 59–72. The best surveys of the use of literature in the German Order are still the publications by Karl Helm and Walther Ziesemer, leading to the survey: *Die Literatur des deutschen Ritterordens*, vol. 94, Gießener Beiträge zur deutschen Philologie (Gießen: Schmitz, 1951). The only recent dictionary entry on the topic, by Irene Erfen-Hänsch, "Deutschordensliteratur," in *Lexikon des Mittelalters* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1995), 3: col. 917ff., builds entirely on their work and that of Gerhard Eis, "Deutschordensliteratur," in *Reallexikon* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1958), 1: 44–251. Recently, there has been a debate on whether the term *Deutschordensdichtung* is justifiable since most of the works read and used in the order were not written by Teutonic knights (a survey on that topic by Arno Mentzel-Reuters, "Bibeldichtung und Deutscher Orden: Studien zur *Judith* und zu Heinrichs von Hesler *Apokalypse*," *Daphnis* 26 [1997]: 209–261) but for my topic this is irrelevant, since it is the reception of the Maccabees that is important, not those involved in the reception. For a promising new project on the collective identity of the Teutonic knights, proposed by Edith Feistner, Michael Neecke and Gisela Vollmann-Profe, see: "Ausbildung korporativer Identität im Deutschen Orden: Zum Verhältnis zwischen Bibelepik und Ordenschronistik: Werkstattbericht," in *Deutschsprachige Literatur des Mittelalters im östlichen Europa: Forschungsstand und Forschungsperspektiven*, ed. Ralf G. Päsler and Dietrich Schmidtke, Beiträge zur älteren Literaturgeschichte (Heidelberg: Winter, 2006), 57–74.

⁴ *Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens nach den ältesten Handschriften*, ed. Max Perlbach (Halle: Niemeyer, 1890) (reprint Hildesheim/New York: Olms, 1975), 25, § 3ff.

Prolog §3: Wir gedenken ouch des lobeliches strîtes, der wert vor Gote was, der ritter, die dâ heizent Machâbei, wie sterclîche die durch ir ê unde umme den gelouben striten mit den heiden, die sie twingen wolden, daz sie Gotes verlougten, unde mit sîner helfe sie sô gar überwunden unde vertiligeten, daz sie die heiligen stete wider gereinegeten, die sie hêten geunreint, unde den vride macheten wider in dem lande.

Prologue §3: We also remind you of the laudable struggle, pleasing to God, by the knights called Maccabees, and how because of their covenant and because of their faith they fought valiantly against the heathen who were intent on forcing them to renounce God; and how, with His help, they conquered and extirpated them completely so that the sacred sites which they had polluted were purified again, and how they restored peace in the country.

§4: Disen strîten hat nâchgevolget herteclîche dirre heilige ritterliche orden des spîtales sente Marien von dem Thûschen hûse unde hat erarnet, daz er ist gezîret mit manigeme êrsamen gelide, wanne sî sint rittere unde erwelte strîtere, die durch minne der ê unde des vaterlandes vertiligent die vîende des gelouben mit einer starken hant.

§4: These struggles were vigorously prosecuted by this holy order of chivalry of the Hospital of Saint Mary of the German House, which has fully deserved that it should be distinguished by many an honorable member, for they are knights and elect fighters who, because of their love of the covenant and of their fatherland, are exterminating the enemies of the faith with a strong hand.

The Middle High German *Maccabäer*, its redaction, and its reception need to be understood against this backdrop. The substantial text (14410 lines) was probably written in the 1330s but only survives in the one manuscript containing biblical epics from the Commandery in Mergentheim, now in Stuttgart.⁵

My translation is based on the High German version; the Latin version emphasizes other episodes from the Books of the Maccabees: *Subit eciam animum illud laudabile et Deo dignum bellum Machabeorum, qui in deserto feni cibo pasti, ne participes fierent coinquinacionis* [2 Macc 5:2], *zelo legis et fidei repleti, Anthiochum Epiphanem, radicem iniquitatis, qui populum Dei ad ritus gentiles et lupanar epheborum pertrahere nitebatur* [2 Macc 4:12], *Dei suffulti iuvamine adeo contriverunt, ut sancta iterato mundarent, arcem Syon reciperent et redderent pacem terre. 4. Quorum bella sacer hic ordo milicie, videlicet domus hospitalis Theutunicorum sancte marie in Ierusalem, strenue imitans membris honorabilibus meruit decorari, diversis ad diversa Deo digna officia laudabiliter ordinatis. Sunt namque milites et bellatores electi zelo legis patrie manu valida hostes fidei conterentes [...]*.

⁵ Württembergische Landesbibliothek Stuttgart, HB XIII 11. The dating ranges from the second third of the fourteenth century to as late as 1400. See *Die Handschriften der ehemaligen Hofbibliothek Stuttgart*, vol. II, 4,2, *Die Handschriften der Württembergi-*

The large parchment codex was obviously well planned as a presentational volume containing a survey of books used in the German Order for refectory readings, perhaps in an attempt to recreate the lost libraries of Prussia (which we only know about through the inventories). Three independent biblical epics from the thirteenth century, *Judith* of 1254; *Hester*, the rhymed paraphrase of the Book of Esther, a little later; and Heinrich of Hesler's *Apokalypse* of ca. 1300, were combined with three books from the mid-fourteenth century that take up this tradition: the *Maccabäer* and *Daniel* under Luder of Brunswick (Grand Master 1331–1335); *Esra und Nehemia* under Dietrich of Altenburg (Grand Master 1335–1341), who also commissioned Nikolaus of Jeroschin to continue his chronicle account of Prussia.

These texts were written down in four separate parts which were then arranged in the historical order as given in the *Historia Scholastica*.⁶ They offer a particular perspective on history, focusing on the turbulence of what, from this Christian perspective, is considered late Jewish history. This phase starts with the struggle to defend the faith and Holy Land after the Temple's loss, moves onto the period of Babylonian and Persian ruler, then plunges into the "end times" in a dramatic climax. The *Apokalypse* is the only fully illuminated part of the manuscript showing the final battle in the Eschaton in very bright colors, and, echoing the apocalyptic scenes of the Book of Daniel. Both the Old and New Testaments of the Christian Bible are explored from their final stretches, with the Time of Grace completely omitted. This marks a distinct shift from the approach taken in biblical epics such as those collected in Early Middle High German manuscripts: these consider the beginnings of salvation history with versifications of Genesis and Exodus, while the Mergentheim Codex reads that history from its blood-drenched ending.

schen Landesbibliothek Stuttgart, ed. Maria Sophia Buhl and Lotte Kurras (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1969), 90f. For a description of the manuscript with further literature in the *Marburger Repertorium*, see: <http://www.mr1314.de/5919> (last updated in November, 2009).

⁶ For the reception of the *Historia Scholastica* in vernacular writing see James H. Morey, "Peter Comestor, Biblical Paraphrase and the Medieval Popular Bible," *Speculum* 68 (1993): 6–35, and Maria Sherwood-Smith, *Studies in the Reception of the Historia Scholastica of Peter Comestor: The "Schwarzwälder Predigten", the "Weltchronik" of Rudolf von Ems, the "Scolastica" of Jacob van Maerlant, and the "Historiebijbel van 1360"*, vol. 20, *Medium ævum monographs*, n.s. (Oxford: Society for the Study of Mediaeval Languages and Literature, 2000).

Part I = quire 1–3	f. 1–26	<i>Daniel</i>
Part II = quire 4–6	f. 27ra–37ra	<i>Esra & Nehemia</i>
	f. 37ra–45vc	<i>Judith</i>
	f. 45vc–51vc	<i>Hester</i>
Part III = quire 7–11	f. 52–96	<i>Maccabäer</i>
Part IV = quire 12–18	f. 97–172	Heinrich of Hesler: <i>Apokalypse</i>

The five books of the Old Testament and the Apocalypse in rhymed German couplets are written in elaborate textura, in an impressive three-columned folio layout (36.5 × 49.5 cm), with historiated initials and full page miniatures for the Apocalypse, in which Teutonic knights figure as fighters.⁷

This volume was long taken as proof that there was an effort to compile a full German Bible for the German Order.⁸ The textual evidence for this was taken from the epilogue of the *Maccabäer* which states that the books should work as a *bant* (tie), a knot for the Old Testament and an opening for the New Testament (ll. 14244f). And indeed, with direct prose biblical translation, the existence of translations of apocryphal books like the Book of Judith or the Books of the Maccabees can be seen as indicating that the group of translators at least intended to cover the whole of the Bible rather than only the parts used in the liturgy or a specific biblical group, like the prophets. But a full version of the Bible presented in the same manner as was the Book of Maccabees and the codex's other biblical texts would have resulted in a whole library of books. While straightforward translations went "for everything" if they were not focusing on popular single books, for biblical epics, the choice of material is a programmatic statement. We should thus read the designation of the Maccabees as a crucial link between the two Testaments as an assurance of orthodoxy, which is always an important issue, especially with apocryphal books.

⁷ Publications on the illuminated apocalypses: Heinrich von Hesler, *Die Apokalypse: Königsberger Apokalypse: (Mikrofiche-Ed. der Hs. Toruń, Biblioteka Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, ms. Rps. 64 und ms. Rps. 44)*, ed. Volker Honemann, vol. 27, *Codices illuminati medii aevi* (Munich: Ed. Lengenfelder, 2000); a survey in Norbert H. Ott, *Katalog der deutschsprachigen illuminierten Handschriften des Mittelalters* (Munich: Beck, 1987), 1: 234–236.

⁸ This reasoning begins with Arthur Hübner, *Daniel, eine Deutschordensdichtung*, vol. 1, Palaestra (Berlin: Mayer und Müller, 1911), 85, and is taken up by Helm and Ziesemer in their larger number of publications on the German Order. When parchment fragments of a German text with biblical content were found in Prussia, they were dubbed a "Preußenbibel" in an attempt to establish that there had been such a thing as a full German Bible before Luther.

The passage with this description is remarkable in another respect: the praise of the unifying potential of the book is mirrored in the effect of a continuous line built up by two rhymes sustained over 48 lines, culminating in hymnic praise of the joys provided by the New Testament, which is hailed as inaugurating *tempus gracie* (l. 14311). This passage spans the gap between the last centuries B.C.E. and the immediately following apocalyptic vision, offering the counterpoint of Christian hope.

All the biblical epics known to have been read in the German Order, especially the Mergentheim Codex, share a distinctive profile for which the *Maccabäer* provides a key. What has been chosen are not the established bestsellers of monastic life, the Psalter and the liturgically structured gospel and epistle readings; rather, the focus is on action-packed narratives based in the Holy Land, stories that could be seen as historical forerunners of the German Order's early days in Palestine and their fight against the "heathen" in their own time in Prussia. The passage from the *Statutes* shows how the Maccabees provided a perfect match for this literary interest, so that the knights could be seen as *alteri Maccabei* in a typological sense: they fulfilled the historic prefiguration of the Old Covenant under the auspices of the New.

The selection of biblical books allowing an easy identification of this sort was adopted by a group of authors not part of the intended audience, namely, people who were illiterate in the sense of not having any training in Latin or theology. This was the case at least until the fifteenth century when Jörg Stuler, himself a Teutonic Knight, prepared a prose digest of earlier reading matter for the order, using only vernacular sources⁹ with the possible exception of the mid-fourteenth

⁹ *Judith*: Aus der Stuttgarter Handschrift HB XIII 11, 2. (nach der Ausgabe von Rudolf Palgen), ed. Hans-Georg Richert, vol. 18, ATB (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1969). On Jörg Stuler, see: Henrike Lähnemann, 'Hystoria Judith': *Deutsche Judithdichtungen vom 12. bis zum 16. Jahrhundert*, vol. 20, Scrinium Friburgense (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2006), 233–255; and Gisela Kornrumpf, "Stuler, Jörg OT" in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1995), 9: col. 464–466. The Maccabees are not present in his pick of historical examples, although he turned two other books from the Mergentheim Codex (*Judith* and *Hester*) into prose. Even the binding of the volume Württembergische Landesbibliothek Stuttgart, HB XIII 10, from 1569, is tied to the volume's bellicose theme: the embossed leather shows Judith on the front, placing the head of Holofernes on a windowsill under which is placed a quote from Psalm 144: *voluntatem timencium es* [recte: *se*] *faciet dominus* (The Lord will do the will of them that fear him [Douay-Rheims translation of the Clementine Vulgate used here and in the following quotes; version consulted via the Clementine text project, <http://vulsearch.sf.net/>], Ps. 144:19); on the back is Jael with a quote from

century author of the *Historien der alden ê* (*Stories from the Old Covenant*), who had a rudimentary knowledge of Latin at best. Although no author can be named for most of the biblical epics of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, the literary profile of nearly all of the extant works is clearly that of theologically learned clerics, well versed in Latin. They came to the task of preparing biblical material for table readings with a different set of values and interests. For them, “battles” were in the first instance spiritual struggles, the way to victory was prayer. The Old Testament, in particular, had to be read allegorically. This clash of interests is made very clear by another book in the Mergentheim collection, the epic version of the Book of Judith.¹⁰ The *Judith* of 1254 (2814 extant lines) represents the earliest biblical epic used in the German Order; it became a model for the following commissions. The unknown author addresses a “dear brother and friend” and stresses the canonicity of the book, which, like the Maccabees, is set on the Bible’s apocryphal fringes (ll. 101–108):

Judith: Nu stille ich diner bete ruch,
also daz ich dir tichte ein buch
zu dute, so ich beste kan
und mirz die gotes liebe gan.
des name ist genant *Judith*,
der heiligen schrift ein gelit
ersam und geneme. 105

Now I am fulfilling your wish to write a book for you in German, as well as I can and as I am granted grace by God for it. 105 Its name is called *Judith*, an integral part of Holy Scripture, honorable and delightful.

But more important is the author’s insistence that a proper appreciation of the contents is only possible through a spiritual interpretation, which he is prepared to give: he assures the reader that he will compose even more than is written in the Book of Judith: “*noch me tichten...dan in dem buche ist geschriben*” (ll. 110/123). He then proposes

the *Song of Deborah*: *sic pereant omnes inimici tui Domine* (Thus all your enemies should perish, Lord, Judges 5:31). The same combination of plates can be found in another manuscript from the Teutonic Order, Württembergische Landesbibliothek Stuttgart, HB XI 43, with pragmatic texts, by Ortolf of Baierland and Konrad of Megenberg, among others. Both of these manuscripts are from the Commandery in Mergentheim, like the collection of biblical epics containing the *Maccabäer*.

¹⁰ See Lähmann, “*Hystoria Judith*”, 191–232. For new research on the textual basis of the Book of Judith cf. “The Sword of Judith. Judith Studies across the Disciplines”, ed. Kevin R. Brine, Elena Ciletti, and Henrike Lähmann (Cambridge: Open Book Publishing, 2010), full text online: <http://www.openbookpublishers.com/product.php/28/>.

to do so in digressions because the story as such only forms the basis for what the book is about. He lays great emphasis on the argument that to understand the book in a literal sense is to misunderstand it completely (ll. 669–675):

Judith: wiltuz vor eine fabula han
und also blozlich verstan, 670
als ich dir schrieb ein mere, –
owe daz wurde mir swere
und machte mir wol werden zorn,
wand so were gar verlorn
die arbeit die ich leite an dich. 675

If you take it just as a fairy tale 670 and would understand it in a literal sense as if I were making up a story for you, – fie, this would seriously trouble me and might raise my anger, since 675 all my toils for you would be in vain.

Here *fabula* has to be taken in the sense of the Vulgate, where it is used as a translation for “myths” (cf. 2 Tim 4:4 = *a veritate quidem auditum avertent ad fabulas autem convertentur*), which is to say in the sense of a tale without spiritual meaning. In the Mergentheim Codex, the only extant manuscript for either *Judith* or the *Maccabäer*, this clear demarcation of what is bare “fable” from what is “spiritual exercise” led to the reverse of what the anonymous author had promised: the digressions are left out, reducing the poem to precisely the literal narration scorned in the prologue. When the model of *Judith* was taken up by the German Order for table readings of biblical epics, the conflict between what the learned authors wanted and what the audience appreciated seems to have been taken up as well. In *Hester*,¹¹ the paraphrase of the biblical Book of Esther, which is heavily influenced by the rhetoric of *Judith*, the elaborate theology of the prologue matches the admonition in the epilogue, for the sake of understanding the book as a call to prayer “to our Hester: the virgin Mary” (l. 1950f: *unse hester anschrien, . . . Marien*). As unconnected metatexts, these frame the verse paraphrase, which remains without any interpretation.

The same dynamic is at work in the *Maccabäer*: an impressive theological facade is built up by the complete translation of the dedicatory

¹¹ Manfred Caliebe, *Hester: eine poetische Paraphrase des Buches Esther aus dem Ordensland Preußen: Edition und Kommentar*, vol. 21, Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des deutschen Ordens (Marburg: Elwert, 1985).

epistles from the commentary of Rabanus Maurus and Jerome's prologue to his translation of the Book of Maccabees for the Vulgate.

The structure is as follows:

1	Prologue by the author to explain the textual history of the German work
45	Translation of the dedicatory letter by Rabanus Maurus to Louis the Pious
157	and to the archdeacon Gerold
265	Author's preface
357	Jerome's Preface to the Vulgate version of 1 Maccabees
387	Rhyme paraphrase of 1 Maccabees
7014	Jerome's Preface to the Vulgate version of 2 Maccabees
7079	Rhyme paraphrase of 2 Maccabees
11263	Summary of 3 Maccabees, following the <i>Historia Scholastica</i>
14217	Epilogue

Each part of the book is marked by a rhymed rubric, as is the paraphrase of each chapter. This is a structural feature that the author designates as an important device from the very beginning, when he writes: (*Middle High German*), that is, "all the rubrics you find in here, read them with utmost care."

These rubrics give the text a simultaneously festive and scholarly appearance. However, they also keep strictly to the letter, furnishing the chapter number, providing short summaries of the following chapter, and so forth. These rhymed couplets, written in red, are the main structuring feature of the text, and the color is the very first indication of their importance as a guide to grasping its meaning. For the most part, they are the only interventions by the author, who otherwise retreats behind the text into his role as translator of the Vulgate, of Jerome's prologue, and of the dedicatory epistles by Rabanus Maurus, to whom he delegates the explanation of the importance of a spiritual understanding.

This is in keeping with the whole disconcerting mismatch manifest in this text. After the weighty opening material, which also features historiated initials prominently, the invoked authorities of biblical exegesis are completely dispensed with. Not one of the allegorical explanations furnished in Rabanus' commentary figures in the book, neither in the way the story is told nor in digressions. The short explanations offered for Hebrew names and similar material keep strictly to

the literal meaning and the historical facts, without venturing into the spiritual realm. The only digressions present are taken from the *Historia Scholastica*, with each digression marked *Scholastica* or simply “the gloss.” For example, the insertion of material related to Alexander, following 1 Macc 1:11, is clearly marked as a digression taken from the *Historia Scholastica* (ll. 451–468):

Die Biblen lan wir nu ligen	
etsliche wile verzigen,	
ein teil muzen wir ummegan	
unz wir komen her wider an.	
Seht dise ummerede nu,	455
die wir ouch brengen da herzu,	
Scholastica uns die spricht	
uz andren cronken sie brichet	
von dem grozen Allexandro [...]	460
Uf daz uns die materie hie	465
allen dest vernemlicher si,	
des wollen wir sie bescheiden	
zwischen disen reden beiden.	

The Bible we now leave for a while, since we have to digress a little before we return to it. 455 Look at this digression, which we now supply in addition as spoken by the *Scholastica* who extracts from other chronicles information about the great Alexander [...]. 465 To make this matter better understandable to everybody, we want to inform you about it in between these two discourses.

This historical explanation becomes the supreme authority for scriptural interpretation in the vernacular. The epilogue summarizes this role once more (14345–55):

Wer dise schrift wil irkunden,	14345
der sal niht zu allen stunden	
gevolgen deme texte na;	
man sal sich vurhten hie und da,	
wie man ez rehte verneme,	
einen rat so geb ich deme:	14350
er sal sehen an die glose	
waz sie von der sache kose	
(wand daz ist die rehte warheit	
von den heiligen uz geleit),	
so mac er geloubic besten.	14355

14345 He who wants to explore this Scripture should not at all times follow the text; one should be apprehensive here and there regarding how to

comprehend it correctly; 14350 I give him one piece of advice: he should look and see what the gloss tells us about the topic (because this is the absolute truth, explained by the saints), then he can survive as a man of faith.

Other than with the *Judith*, this was not the result of editing done by whoever devised the program of the Mergentheim Codex or its source; it was rather a case of “self-censorship.” By the time the *Maccabäer* was written, more than half a century after *Judith*, it had become a staple feature of literary commissions for the Teutonic Order to leave out excursions into spirituality. Inserted between the dedicatory epistles taken from Rabanus and the prologue to the First Book of Maccabees taken from Jerome, there are a hundred lines claiming to represent the voice of the author – only to be followed by the declaration that he has strictly refrained from any alterations to the literal text. For example, after the usual rhymed rubric (ll. 265ff) explaining that what follows represents that authorial voice (*rede des dutschen auctoris*),¹² and the usual humility *topos*, his non-intervention in the storyline is strongly emphasized (ll. 315–329):

Nu sult ir wizzen, daz ich man	315
von dirre beider buch angan	
biz uz der capitel ende	
keine rede darin wende;	
ez ist gar der historien sin,	315
miner rede kumt niht darin;	
ane ein weninc ist namen,	
die unvernemelich quamen	
und uz alden cronken here	
der Juden Criechen Romere,	320
als sie die Scholastica treit	
so vil ist darzu uzgeleit;	
ouch ein teil geb ich underscheit	
waz dirre und der hat geseit.	
Wil ieman wizzen wer er si,	325
der dise rede nu tut hie,	
sines namen man niht endarf,	
wand er ist der sinne unscharf,	
des mac er haben keinen danc, [...]	

¹² Next to this line in the Mergentheim Codex, f. 52vc, is the Brunswick coat of arms. Helm, Maccabäer, 94, took this as a reason to attribute the work to Luder of Magdeburg. But it is more likely that he was the one who commissioned the work, as he did with *Daniel* and as was usual for Grand Masters.

315 Now you have to know that I, the man, have no content whatsoever in it from the beginning of both of the books until the very end of the chapter; 315 it is exclusively the essence of the story, without any opinion of mine; the only exception are names which seems to be incomprehensible and which have been supplied from old chronicles 320 of the Jews, the Greeks and the Romans as given by Scholastica; I also report occasionally what one or the other of the authorities told.

325 Should you want to know who he is who now delivers this discourse – there is no need for his name since he is without sharp intellect, therefore he does not want any thanks for it [...].

This is followed by 26 lines, all rhyming with *-anc* (it is not the ending as such that is astonishing – rather one of the most common Middle High German end syllables – but its excessive use), that place the statement in the tradition of the highly rhetorical humility *topos*, especially popular with medieval monastic authors.

Ornamentation through rhyme and rhythm is prevalent throughout with a marked tendency towards embellishing the battles and fights linking the biblical epic with heroic romances that the knights would have known, thus highlighting a literal understanding of fighting. When Judas is introduced as a hero, his first battle (1 Macc 9:17–19) contains a section (ll. 4091–4124) full of onomatopoetic splendor. It starts off with 18 lines rhyming with *-egen*, rattling along to characterize Judas' heroic attack. This is followed by the only instance where the constant beat of a strictly octosyllabic line is given up for what in modern German terminology is called *Schlagreime* ("hit rhymes"):

An sprenge Judas der degen,	4091
strites wold er mit en pflegen,	
lebens hat er sich irwegen. [...]	
Wacha, wach, wie gienc er vegen	4105
allen enden uf den wegen,	
keiner dorfte da niht tregen,	
swem er sich begunde negen.	
Entfan	
noch van	4110
niht geschan;	
ane wan	
man mohte an	
dan sehen slan	
san manchen man,	4115
swan er began,	
gran zan was da bloz mit grisgran,	

ran bran uz wunden heizer tran,
 ban han todes wart sie an gan,
 wan stan must ir vil satel lan. 4120
 Er warf die heiden uf den plan,
 daz en daz leben gar entran,
 so wol wart ez von im getan,
 daz ez nieman volsagen kan.

Onward came galloping Judas, the hero, eager to battle with them, not caring for his life. [...] 4105 Behold, behold! how he was a storm from all sides on their ways, nobody was allowed to be slow when he was advancing towards him. Neither his advancing 4110 nor retiring was shameful; doubtless, one could look at him slaying 4115 many men without a qualm, as soon as he started, there was a baring of angry teeth for gnashing, a hot stream of fire ran out of the wounds, the bane of death started to go against them (?), 4120 many were forced to quit their saddles. He threw the heathen onto the plain so that their life escaped them completely: everything was so well done by him that nobody can fully sing his praise.

This is part of a strategy for addressing a noble lay audience with an interest in stories but without the upbringing for and inclination towards learned exegesis. This is clearly stated in the epilogue, which delineates the share of work between *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa* in a way similar to the prologue to the statutes, where the role of the priests in the order is also added on at the end (ll. 14356–14370):

Niht sal er nach dem texte gen,
 im queme davon schade groz
 ob er volget dem texte bloz
 sunderlichen doch den leien
 die niht kunnen mancherleien 14360
 schrift hin unde here lenken,
 sie kunnen ez niht bedenken
 wie man ez rehte sal verstan,
 des sullen sie die wisheit han,
 daz en daz vragen sie bereit 14365
 die vil hochgelobten pfafheit,
 von der uns allez gut bekumt,
 daz uns zur sele dort gevrumt;
 want werlich der gerehte sin
 ganzes gelouben ist an in. 14370

He should not follow the text, he would be greatly harmed if he were to follow the naked text, this is especially true of the laity 14360 who are unable to steer Scripture hither and thither; they are unable to consider how it is to be understood correctly, therefore they should have the wisdom readily

14365 to ask the highly commendable clergy from whom all good comes to us that might be beneficial for our souls hereafter; for certainly the just sense 14370 of full faith can be found in them.

The formulations (“naked text,” “correct understanding”) take up the issues of the *Judith*-prologue but turn it in a different direction; its interpretation is not going to be delivered within the biblical epic, but everybody is bound to enquire into its spiritual sense by asking the priests, listening to sermons, and praying for enlightenment (ll. 14371–14390):

Davon darf sich nieman schemen, daz die leien niht vernemen gar die vorbenanden schrift hie ob sie niht lere han dabi. Ieclicher sal sich entladen	14375
daz er iht gewinne schaden; en betriegen der schrifte wort, ob er niht vraget vurbaz vort wie er die dinc sal vernemen, daz sie dem gelouben zemen.	14380
Die werde pfafheit allez gar uns daz entrihten wol vurwar; swie sie predgen unde leren, also sal man die schrift keren, want wir werden bewart daran	14385
daz wir von gote lon entfan; darzu vlehen unde bitten sullen wir mit steten siten als wir anheben nu ein teil, von himle geb uns got daz heil.	14390

Therefore nobody should be ashamed that the laity does not take in fully the aforementioned Scripture as long as they do not have instruction along with it. 14375 Everybody should free himself from this notion so that he is not damaged; he will be deceived by the words of Scripture if he does not continue asking how he is supposed to receive the information 14380 to make it conform to faith. The worthy clergy want to perform this task for us completely; Scripture is to be turned in whatever way they are preaching and teaching, 14385 because then we are preserved in that matter so that we will receive reward from God. To that end, we should beseech and implore God constantly, as we now start to do in part, 14390 may God in heaven grant us salvation.

This defends a clear division of labor between unashamedly illiterate lay-people and the clergy employed for interpretation; it thus reflects the

singularity of the literary network of the German Order in which the *Maccabäer* is firmly rooted. This is shown by the intertextual references as well. Besides the *Historia Scholastica*, there are also pointers to the *Passional*, a collection of saints' lives with emphasis on martyrs – again something as literal and historical as devotional literature can be. At the end of the biblical account offered in the last part in the shortening paraphrase of the *Historia Scholastica*, anybody curious to know more about the wickedness of Herod the Great is told to look first of all in the earlier part (ll. 14187–14190):

als man liset da vor ein drum
des ersten Machabeorum,
da vint man ez vil wol inne
nahen bi deme beginne 14190

As you could read bits of it earlier on, in the first Book of the Maccabees; there it can be well found, 14190 near the beginning.

On the topic of Herod's death, further sources are provided (ll. 14199–14204):

Wie er irstab, daz vindet ir
in Josepho nach uwer gir, 14200
Scholastica, Passional
beschriben ez gar uber al:
daz sult ir nu vurbaz suchen
swes ir begert uz den buchen.

How he died you can find 14200 in Josephus, if you wish. The *Historia Scholastica* and the *Passional* give an exhaustive account of it: therefore, look up those books for any further reading you might want.

A further reference to the *Passional* comes in l. 14144, again in the context of Herod, "the mighty murderer." There are references to the *Maccabäer* and the *Apokalypse* in *Daniel*, the work that will open the later collection of the Mergentheim Codex (the temporal framework of the *Historia Scholastica* meant that *Daniel* came before *Esra und Nehemia*, which in turn preceded *Hester* and *Judith*).

Daniel: swer nu disser rede gert 6216
vurbaz, der suche die dort
Machabeorum dutscher wort
gemachet zum ersten an.¹³

¹³ Hübner, *Daniel*, 95.

Whoever is further interested in this explanation [referring to the gloss on Daniel 8 on the relationship between Darius and Alexander], look for it near the beginning of the German version made of the Book of the Maccabees [referring to the digression on Alexander around ll. 961ff].

This is noteworthy since no other books, commentaries, or glosses are mentioned in *Daniel*. Equally, *Esra und Nehemia* in the Mergentheim Codex quotes *Maccabäer* and is quoted in turn in *Historien der alden ê*.¹⁴ The *Historien*, an Old Testament digest probably written around the same time the Mergentheim Codex was produced, provides some rather peculiar insight into the network of biblical epics, historical accounts, and hagiographical literature used in the German Order. The author is very clear about his interest in the basic story line (ll. 35–43):

Historien der alden ê: Di bucher der nuwen e 35
 Ich laze varn, und durch vle
 Wil ich ein buch grifen an
 Der alden e; ir sult verstan,
 Di heilge scrift an allen wanc
 Ist gar swer und alzu lanc; 40
 Dorumme wil ich grifen an
 Di historien und uberslan
 Nach minen sinnen, als ich mag.

I leave the books of the New Testament aside, and because of popular demand I will start a book of the Old Testament; you must understand that Holy Scripture is, without doubt, very profound and much too long; therefore I will concentrate on the stories and eliminate as much as I see fit.

Before summarizing the Old Testament's historical books in very rapid fashion and with many errors proceeds to define what he means by *historien* (ll. 51–53):

Historien der alden ê: Historien, di wisen ien,
 Sin werk, di da sint geschen
 In der alden e hivor.

¹⁴ *Historien der alden e*, ed. Wilhelm Gerhard, vol. 271, Bibliothek des literarischen Vereins in Stuttgart (Leipzig: Hiersemann, 1927). The only manuscript (Königsberg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Hs. 907) is lost. Ralf G. Päsler, *Katalog der mittelalterlichen deutschsprachigen Handschriften der ehemaligen Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Königsberg: Nebst Beschreibungen der mittelalterlichen deutschsprachigen Fragmente des ehemaligen Staatsarchivs Königsberg: Auf der Grundlage der Vorarbeiten Ludwig Deneckes*, ed. Uwe Meves, vol. 15, Schriften des Bundesinstituts für ostdeutsche Kultur und Geschichte (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2000), 105f., 276–278.

Histories, wise people claim, are deeds that happened earlier, in the Old Testament.

It is apparent that he worked as far as possible from pre-digested vernacular sources such as *Esra und Nehemia* and had recourse for the rest to the *Historia Scholastica*, without understanding much of it. He probably had no access to a copy of the *Maccabäer*, since there are many factual errors and confused historical sequences. Nevertheless, the stories of the Maccabees were clearly among his favorite, receiving 400 out of the total of 6165 lines. He stresses the fact that the Maccabees were laymen (ll. 5389f: *Und ouch wizzet bi der schicht, / Die zwene waren phaffen nicht* [And by the way, you should know that the two of them were not priests]). In the main, the text is a quick succession of hit and miss (ll. 5135–5142):

<i>Historien der alden ê</i> : Dornach gab Judas vorgeant	5135
Eupatori sin rechte hant.	
Alchimi besagen er vortrug,	
Nycanori houbt er abslug,	
Und dornach er aneving	
Ein gelubde und aneing	5140
Mit den Romern. Vort ungespart	
Er van Bachide irslain wart.	

5135 Then the aforementioned Judas gave Eupator his right hand. He endured the claims of Alchimus, cut off the head of Nicanor, and then took 5140 a vow and aligned himself with the Romans. Then, without more ado, he was slain by Bacchides.

There is a clear confusion here with Judas' actual hacking off of Nicanor's hand (2 Macc 15:30); this is followed by an account of Eleazar excavating a town called *Elephantum* (l. 5146) – a rather odd reinterpretation of Eleazar killing the elephant in 1 Macc 6:43–46.

Historien der alden ê is the exception, not the rule; in its authorial ignorance, it reveals poor literary quality. But in its crude abbreviations, some features of the literary network of biblical epic used in the German Order are foregrounded: the vulgarisation of the reception of theological knowledge in the vernacular, and the fascination with taking the literary models literally.

In the *Maccabäer*, the literal level is much more cautiously framed and presented. But notwithstanding the theological framework, the exhortation to seek spiritual mentoring in the reception of biblical

stories, and the reliable presentation of text and sources by the author, the fact remains that what is transmitted most forcefully is a fascination with the Maccabees as prototypical godly heroes. Within the German Order, the “de-allegorization” of the theological-commentary tradition has turned the genre of biblical epics into a form of entertainment that offers role models. The material selected for reception and imitation provides a pattern for action, not for meditation or interpretation. The ambiguity brought into the book by the epilogue, with its general warning against a literal understanding of Scripture, has no force in light of the sensationally presented individual historical facts such as the onomatopoetic fighting of Judas. How else should that be read than as a call to fighting for the faith?

The magnificence of the Mergentheim Codex suggests that, emerging at the end of the 14th century, it already contains an antiquarian and sentimental appeal to former glory: the times of heathen-bashing were over, not only in the Holy Land but also in Prussia. What remained was praise for the Maccabees in the vernacular idiom of the *alteri Maccabei*.¹⁵

¹⁵ I would like to thank Timothy McFarland (UCL) for his valuable critical comments and extensive linguistic help.

THE RECEPTION OF THE BOOKS OF THE MACCABEES IN THE HUSSITE REFORMATION

Pavína Rychterová and Pavel Soukup

On July 30 1419, the bitter verbal battle of the Bohemian reformers for a “proper” veneration of Christ took a violent turn: led by the radical Hussite preacher John Želivský, an armed mob moved toward the city hall of the New Town of Prague, entered the building, seized the councilors, and threw them out of a window onto the street, where they experienced a horrible end. In this manner, the gate was opened to a religious war between Christians. For a long time the country knew no peace: first foreign crusaders invaded Bohemia, then Hussites battled Hussites, only to be soon forced, once more, to resist the crusader troops. A peace treaty could finally be signed with Sigismund of Luxemburg, Bohemian successor to the throne, in 1436, a peace no one really wanted in the form it took, but that was accepted nonetheless because continued fighting was seen as intolerable.¹

The Hussites fought for their brand of faith for almost twenty years. Despite all tension, splits, and upheavals, the core concepts at work in Hussite faith remained the same over the years. This was only possible through a powerful symbolic elevation of the Hussite struggle, which relied on many expedients.

This is the framework for addressing the question of how and to what extent the Bohemian reformers resorted to the Maccabees as an example, a question that very few scholars have taken up until now, among them František Jindřich Holeček, one of the leading experts in the theological discussions unfolding at the University of Prague in the fifteenth century. Holeček has come to the conclusion that the influence of the Maccabean texts on the Hussites, who understood themselves as the “true church of God,” can hardly be exaggerated.² Initially

¹ For a detailed description and assessment of research on the Hussite wars, see František Šmahel, *Die hussitische Revolution I–III*, transl. Thomas Krzenck, vol. 43, *Schriften der Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (Hannover: Hahn, 2002).

² František J. Holeček, “Makkabäische Inspiration des hussitischen Choralen ‘Ktož jsú boží bojovníci’ [‘You who are warriors of God and his law’],” in *In memoriam Josefa Macka (1922–1991): Sborník prací k nedožitým 75. narozeninám akademika*

this viewpoint seems inviting, particularly in light of the first strophe of the battle song the Hussites used in 1431 to set the crusaders' army led by Cardinal Julian Cesarini into flight at Taus: "You, who are warriors of God and His law, beseech help from God and trust in Him, so that in the end you will always be victorious with Him".³ Nevertheless, the relationship between Hussites and Maccabees appears to be somewhat more complicated than we might first suspect. Holeček cannot, in fact, show a direct influence of the Maccabean books on the reform theologians. Rather, he argues with analogies situated in the thematic field of "defense of Christ's truth and God's law." The theologian may find similarities satisfactory; but these cannot convince the historian.⁴

In the first two decades of the fifteenth century, the most important years for the ideological shaping of the Bohemian Reformation, little pointed to the champions of reform taking up threshing instruments and boar-spears one day to defy, like the Maccabees, a superior military power. Correspondingly, at the start of the Reformation, we find little recourse to the Maccabees as an example. Although this was to change during the outbreak of the war, references to the Hasmoneans were still relatively rare, for the war ideology of the Hussites relied almost absolutely on references to the Revelation of John.

Nevertheless, examining the reception of the Maccabean books in Hussite exegesis and the Hussite catechism turns out to be a worthwhile task. The source evidence for the use of the Maccabean books is rather scarce, but in view of the impressive dynamic developed by the Bohemian Reformation in the century's first three decades it is highly varied. This fact allows several assumptions: the reformers were not really concerned with the Maccabean books, no original interpretation of the material had emerged from Prague's circles of theological reform

Josefa Macka, ed. Miloslav Polívka and František Šmahel (Prague: Historický Ústav, 1996), 111–123.

³ Edition of original text in: *Husitské písně*, ed. Jiří Daňhelka, vol. 60, Národní klenotnice (Prague: Československý Spisovatel, 1952), 183–184. For an English translation, see Frederick G. Heymann, *John Žižka and the Hussite Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), 497–498.

⁴ For example the correspondence of the above-cited Hussite choral with the Maccabean books does not seem all that persuasive, especially when compared to other vernacular and Latin songs and poems of the Hussite period; these often are direct renderings of key biblical passages—something we do not have for the books of the Maccabees. See *Veršované skladby doby husitské*, ed. František Svejkský, vol. 26, Památky staré literatury české (Prague: Nakladatelství Československé akademie věd, 1963), 90–98.

before the war's outbreak, the Maccabean books did not play any sort of dominant role in the theological argumentation of either reformers or their opponents, and the Maccabees ended up constituting "situational arguments" during the course of the war and in its aftermath. In any case, approaching the Maccabees as a second or third order argument allows us a more differentiated view of the Bohemian debate about reform than would be the case if we were to concentrate on a single dominant argument within the Reformers' discourse.

1

From our perspective, the year 1412 can be understood as marking a caesura in the Bohemian Reformation's development, which moved from an academic discussion to the constitution of a confession with proto-national traits.⁵ In 1412, a quarrel broke out between the university's reformist party and King Wenceslas IV of Bohemia, who until then had shown enthusiasm for the reform. Almost all of its non-Bohemian opponents had already left the university three years before, after the King released the Decree of Kutná Hora, which brought the university under the domination of the Czech reform party. By the time of this late quarrel, the lay followers of the Prague reformists had radicalized themselves to the point that violent confrontations developed between conservatives and reformists. Also in 1412, John Hus, a leader of the reform party at the university finally opted for an open confrontation with the Church and thus took the path that would bring him to the stake in Constance.

In the fall of 1411 at the Council of Pisa, newly elected Pope John XXIII had proclaimed a crusade against the defiant King Ladislas of Naples. The crusade was tied to indulgences for all believers financially participating in the enterprise. The ruling European houses had no real interest in the grave difficulties facing the former pirate Baldassare Cosa, the Antipope John XXIII. Some of them even strictly declined to proclaim the crusade in their own lands. For example, the Duke of Austria, Albrecht V, refused to allow the proclaiming of the

⁵ The present account of the events of 1412 is mainly based on the following works: Jan Sedlák, *Jan Hus* (Prague: Dědictví Prokopa, 1915), 230–248; Václav Novotný, *Mistr Jan Hus: Život a učení. Díl I: Život a dílo* (Prague: Laichter, 1921), 61–133; František Šmahel, *Die hussitische Revolution II*, 867–878.

crusade and of the indulgences because the theologians at the University of Vienna, some of whom were former opponents of Hus and his followers at the University of Prague, despised the commercial manner in which the indulgences were proclaimed.

In Bohemia, probably on political and strategic grounds, King Wenceslas himself supported the crusading and dispensation campaign, thus rebuffing the proponents of reform at the University Prague: Even the University of Vienna, where several former conservatives from Prague taught, was capable of preventing the "sale" of indulgences! John Hus immediately protested in a letter addressed to the king himself that contained a harsh verdict regarding the pope.⁶ When he saw he was accomplishing nothing, he turned to the University of Prague. When the Faculty of Liberal Arts placed itself behind the reformer, the theologians, led by Hus's friends Stanislaus of Znaim and Stephan of Palecz, followed the King's orders. The royal counselors tried to conciliate the doctors and professors, an effort that failed. Visibly annoyed, they advised the learned men to keep their quarrels to themselves in the future.

But it was too late to do so. In Prague's streets, students ridiculed the institution of indulgences and smeared mud over the indulgence chests that had been set up in the St. Vitus Cathedral for collecting the profits. The disturbances had a tragic end when three young craftsmen who had disturbed the proclaiming of indulgences during the prayer services were peremptorily executed on royal command. John Hus accepted responsibility for what had happened: following the failure at the university, he had thundered against the trade in indulgences in Czech from the pulpit. He now pronounced the three dead men martyrs and swore to honor their legacy. From then on, he increasingly understood himself as a chosen warrior for God and a martyr.⁷

⁶ Sedlák, *Několik textů II*, 29–33. Cf. Sedlák, *Jan Hus*, 232: *Apostolicus capiens multam pecuniam ab hominibus, nichil boni per hoc disponit, sed ad suam pompam et superbiam expendit et inter cardinales dividit, qui sunt sui stipendiarii, et sic contra evangelium facit*. See also *Magistri Iohannes Hus Opera omnia: Magistri Iohannis Hus Polemica*, vol. 22, ed. Jaroslav Eršil (Prague: Academiae Scientiarum Bohemoslovenicae, 1966), 135.

⁷ See most recently Pavlína Rychterová, "Jan Hus zwischen Charisma und Institution," in *Das Charisma – Funktionen und symbolische Repräsentationen*, ed. Pavlína Rychterová, Raphaela Veit, and Stefan Seit, vol. 2, *Beiträge zu den historischen Kulturwissenschaften* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2008), 423–445.

Shortly after this episode, Hus wrote his polemical response to the treatise of eight Prague theologians⁸ who had defended the legality of the papal bull regarding the crusade and indulgences. In greater and lesser detail, he commented on the individual articles, citing various authorities, above all the Christian Bible, to demonstrate the irreconcilability of indulgences with Christ's precepts. Among the arguments presented in favor of the bull by the proponents of the indulgences we find a reference, a commonplace in the crusading propaganda, to the divine war of the Maccabees.⁹ In contrast, Hus' main argument against crusades was the fifth commandment, "thou shalt not kill." Priests were themselves, he indicated, not allowed to kill or encourage anyone to do so, as was indicated in both the Gospels and writings of the church fathers. For the reformer, even the crusade against heathens was a deadly sin, of which the pope and all participating clerics were guilty.¹⁰ At the end of his exposition, Hus turned the Maccabean argument against his opponents: he scornfully asked where the man resembling Mattathias could now be found, a man who would punish a pope and the sinful prelates.¹¹ Any such man would in any case not be spotted among the eight theologians. In their case, *timor mundanus* was stronger than *fervor legis Dei*.¹²

⁸ The text *Contra octo doctores* was edited in: *Magistri Iohannes Hus Opera omnia: Magistri Iohannis Hus Polemica*, vol. 22, ed. Jaroslav Eršil (Prague: Academiae Scientiarum Bohemoslovenicae, 1966), 369–488.

⁹ See Gabriela Signori's introduction of this volume as well as Sini Kangas, "Militia Christi meets the Prince of Babylon: The Crusader Conception of Encountering the Enemy," *Frontiers in the Middle Ages* (2006): 107–119, here 108. See also Reuven Firestone, "Conceptions of Holy War in Biblical and Quranic Tradition," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 24, no. 1 (1996): 99–123.

¹⁰ Relative lack of interest on the part of the leading reform theologians at the University of Prague is also shown by a sermon written at roughly the same time by Huss's closest friend Jakoubek of Stříbro, *De bellis*. Here the Maccabees are absent from a listing of Old Testament warriors for God. See František Michálek Bartoš, "Studie o Žižkově a jeho době V: O Žižkovy vozy a nejstarší vojenský řád český," *Časopis Národního musea* 99 (1925): 13–22, here 20.

¹¹ *Magistri Iohannis Hus Polemica*, ed. Eršil, 468: *Ubi est vir Mathathie huic similis, qui oblatam sibi a rege Anthiocho respuit gloriam et morti se et ilios suos et fratres exposuit, nolens transgredi mandatum Dei, et ydolatrias accensus secundum iudicium legis trucidavit? Si ergo ab isto Mathathia valet argumentum doctoribus, cur ipsi manifestos transgressores legis Dei non trucidant, qui pro papa, non pro lege Dei exterminium auctorisant?*

¹² *Ibid.*

Three years later, when John Hus sat in a Constance dungeon and waited for his imminent condemnation, he no longer had the heart to heap scorn on his opponents. In his many letters he turned to his followers and tried to instill the Gospels in them: "Love the truth [notably, of the gospels], protect the truth, defend the truth unto death, at whatever cost." In two of these letters there is also a reference to the Maccabean books. Hus wrote to a "father", an unknown council-participant, who had probably implored him to recant, as follows:¹³

Holy Eleazar, a man of the Old Testament who we read of in the Book of the Maccabees, refused to profess falsely, and eat meat forbidden by the law, because he did not wish to go astray against God nor leave posterity a bad example. How could I, an unworthy priest of the New Testament, sin more heavily by transgressing God's law, abandoning truth, committing perjury, and outrage those close to me, all on account of fear of worldly punishment, which passes quickly?

These lines can hardly be read as demonstrating a special veneration for the Maccabees. This is also the case with the reference to the seven Maccabean brothers in the second letter he wrote in response to the same council participant,¹⁴ which again concerns the recantation Hus was unwilling to offer.¹⁵ Scholastic references to Eleazar and the seven Maccabean brothers can only be found in this correspondence.

¹³ M. Jana Husi korespondence a dokumenty, ed. Václav Novotný (Praha: Komise pro vydávání praměů máboženského hnutí českého, 1920), 281–282: *Si ergo sanctus Eleazarus, Veteris legis homo, de quo in Machabeorum, noluit se mendaciter profiteri comedisse carnes a lege prohibitas, ne contra deum faceret et ne posteris malum exemplum relinqueret: quomodo ego, sacerdos Nove legis, licet indignus, propter timorem pene, que cito preteribit, vellem transgredi, gravius peccando, legem dei, primo recedendo a veritate, 2º periurium faciendo, et tercio proximos scandalizando? Revera expedit michi magis mori, quam fugiendo penam momentaneam, incidere in manus domini et forte post in ignem et obprobrium sempiternum.*

¹⁴ See the prelate's own response to the first letter from Hus (the initial letter from the unknown prelate is not transmitted), *ibid.*, 283–284: *...Item scribo breviter, quia scribo ad intelligentem. Non receditis a veritate, sed acceditis ad veritatem, nec peioratis sed melioratis; non scandalisatis, sed ediicatis. Eleazarus gloriosus Iudeus fuit, Iudea cum Septem filiis et octo martiribus gloriosior, nichilominus Paulus submissus est «in sporta per murum» ad procurandum meliora. Iudex appellacionis vestre, dominus Ihesus Christus, det vobis apostolos et sunt hii. Adhuc maiora debentur tibi pro fide Christi certamina.*

¹⁵ M. Jana Husi korespondence a dokumenty, ed. Novotný, 285–286: *unde pro confortacione mea occurrunt michi septem martires illi vidue Machabei, qui pocius per partes incidi voluerunt, quam comedere carnes contra legem domini. Occurrit et sanc-*

The letters Hus wrote to his Bohemian disciples center around a single powerful figure, Jesus Christ. Most likely, this is less a reflection of Hus himself than of the Prague reformer's split relationship with the veneration of saints. The question was already topical in the 1380s, when the Prague theologian Matthias of Janov tried to obtain permission for lay people to receive communion more frequently – his quest was a daily communion for the laity. As is well known, lay communion would later become one of the most important themes in the reform movement, which culminated in the introduction of the lay chalice. With this development, the Bohemian Reformation definitively stood up against pope and council, factually forming the first Christian confession independent of Rome. It is the case that with the figure of the preacher John Milíč of Kroměříž, Matthias of Janov created the first Bohemian “living saint”, for which the *vita* he wrote provides evidence.¹⁶ Matthias understood Militius not only as a legitimating figure for his own efforts at reform but also tied him to veneration of the *corpus Christi*. Ecclesiastical renewal was to rest simultaneously on transcendent and immanent holiness. The former was embodied in the *corpus Christi*, the latter in a “living” saint who made the place of his work, which is to say Prague, “holy”.

The relative disinterest of the Bohemian reformers in saints venerated by the Church can thus be understood as corresponding with the specific desire for an immanent, living holiness dedicated to the ideals of the reform of the Church.¹⁷ The three martyrs of 1412 were the first

tus Eleazarus, qui, ut ibidem scribitur, noluit solum dicere, quod comedisset carnes prohibitas a lege, ne posteris malum preberet exemplum, sed potius subiit martirium. Quomodo ergo ego, habens illos pre oculis et multos sanctos et sanctas Nove legis, qui et que se tradiderunt martirio. nolentes consentire peccato, tot annis etiam qui predicavi de paciencia et de constancia, deberem mendacia multa et periurium incidere et multos dei filios scandalizare? Absit, absit a me, quia Christus dominus habundantissime remunerabit me, dans auxilium paciencie in presenti.

¹⁶ See in this respect David Mengel, “A Monk, a Preacher, and a Jesuit: Making the Life of Milíč,” in *The Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice*, ed. Zdeněk V. David and David R. Holton, vol. 5, Papers from the Fifth International Symposium, Prague 2002 (Prague: Acad. of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Main Library, 2004), 33–55.

¹⁷ This would end later: when the utraquistic church established itself in Bohemia in the second half of the fifteenth century, references to the Maccabees and other holy figures became more frequent, sometimes in the framework of lives of John Hus and legends about him. See the supplement to the so-called *Passio etc. secundum Johannem Barbatum*, apparently written immediately after Huss's death, in *Petri de Mladoňovic opera historica nec non aliae de M. Johanne Hus et M. Hieronymo Pragensi relationes et memoriae – Historické spisy Petra z Mladoňovic a jiné zprávy a paměti o M. Janovi*

to enjoy this sanctity. Their cult, however, did not develop after 1415, since the self-sacrifice of John Hus soon overshadowed all other professions of faith. From now on, his veneration, together with chalice-communion for lay people, would form the two pillars of the Hussite confession, thanks to which it survived two decades of war.¹⁸ There was little place here for martyrs yearning for the Maccabean model.

3

Already at the start of the uprising in September 1419, we find a citation from 1 Maccabees 2:50–64 placed prominently in the “manifesto” of the followers of the Reformation who assembled on the Bzí mountain. It constitutes a fifth of this relatively short text.¹⁹ The passage is from Mattathias’ address to his sons, in which he enjoins them not only to maintain God’s law but also to give their lives for the law, if necessary. Notably, the manifesto does not cite the following naming of Judas Maccabeus as God’s warrior; the appeal of his father Mattathias to destroy the pagans is also not cited, a fact that is an important indication of the extent to which the Hussite self-understanding and self-description hovered at this time between a spiritual and physical struggle against the antichrist.²⁰ Within internal Hussite discourse of the 1420s, in the self-confirmation of their own chosenness as “warriors for God,” the Apocalypse played a predominant role over and against other Biblical texts. For this reason, it seems clear that an

Husovi a M. Jeronýmovi z Prahy, ed. Václav Novotný, vol. 8, *Fontes rerum bohemicarum* (Prague: Palackého, 1932), 24: „*Nota multis de causis potest quis fieri martir, scilicet pro iustitia, ut Abel, pro lege, ut Machabei prima Machab. 2º, pro salute populi, ut Christus, pro fide, ut Stephanus Act. 7, pro Christo, ut Innocentes, qui non loquendo, sed innocenter paciendo, pro assercione veritatis, ut Isayas, Yeremias et alii prophete, Elyas, Ezechiel, Daniel, pro arguicione peccati, ut Johannes Baptista; similiter Magister noster Johannes Hus istas condiciones habuit primo, 2º et sic de aliis, ut patet, ideo martir Christi effectus est.* In general on the problem of saints and their veneration in the Hussite Reformation see Ota Halama, *Otázka svatých v české reformaci: Její proměny od doby Karla IV. do doby České konfese*, vol. 19, *Fontes Pragenses* (Brno: Marek, 2002).

¹⁸ Pavlína Rychterová, “Le lettere di Giovanni Hus: Funzioni liturgiche,” *Rivista di storia del Cristianesimo* 1 (2008): 131–140. This also contains older literature on the problem.

¹⁹ František Palacký remains responsible for the sole edition of the text, in *Archiv český* 3, 205–206.

²⁰ See Eduard Maur, “Od hory Tábor k svatoludmilskému srazu: K historii poutí na hory v roce 1419,” *Táborský archiv* 11 (2002): 5–37.

identification with models from the Old Covenant had, at best, secondary importance.

There is little evidence of any promotion of the Maccabean books into the ideological arsenal of Hussite ideology during the time of armed conflict. And the few exceptions concern internal Hussite differences of opinion. In his polemic against the militant Taborites, Jakoubek of Stříbro criticized their praise of the Maccabean struggle as pleasing to God, praise they voiced before ordinary people without pointing to the spiritual sense of the biblical narrative.²¹ Like all other moderate reformers, Jakoubek adhered to the late antique and early medieval interpretation of the Maccabean books.²² He firmly rejected a bellicose reading of the books in the service of the struggle over faith. He granted the possibility that God could inspire chosen believers to battle, but such inspirational episodes were very rare. In his time, he indicated, he encountered mostly false prophets who simply feigned such inspiration.²³

It appears that the Maccabean example played a central role precisely among radical Hussites. In a very tendentious work dedicated to the "life of the Taborite priests," John of Příbram remarks in 1430 that the Taborites stylized their veneration of their fallen heroes according to the Maccabean model.²⁴ In the Old Czech transmission of a fictional dispute between three adherents of the Reformation, a conservative

²¹ Jakoubek of Stříbro, "Audio cum contra percussoribus," in *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, ed. Howard Kaminsky (Berkeley et al.: University of California Press, 1967), 528–529. *Attendunt Machabeos, quomodo ipsi pro lege veteri et in veteri pugnaverunt. Ideo movent ut libri Machabeorum populo declarentur. (...) Nec sic ad illam viam imperfectam veteris Machabeorum obligamur. Et non oportet, quod sacerdos ewangelicus per gesta Machabeorum ad talia bella incerta et periculosa usque ad effusionem sanguinis concitet, nisi forte velit dicere populo, quod illa carnalia bella fuerunt figura spiritualium preliorum sacerdotum Cristi et ecclesie sue legis futurorum.*

²² On the late antique context to the interpretation of the Maccabean literature see most recently Luigi F. Pizzolato and Chiara Somenzi, *I sette fratelli maccabei nella chiesa antica d'occidente*, vol. 25, *Studia patristica mediolanensia* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2005).

²³ Jakoubek of Stříbro, "Noverint universi," in *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, ed. Kaminsky, 528: *... exempla bellorum patrum et regum sanctorum veteris testamenti non debent quomodolibet trahi pro confirmatione quorumcumque indifferenter bellorum, cum illa communiter bella fiebant ex certa revelacione, quod iam non sic solet communiter fieri, licet potest contingere, sed raro.*

²⁴ Jan z Příbramě, *Život kněží tábořských*, ed. Jaroslav Boubín, vol. 1, Podbrdsko: Fontes (Příbram: Státní Okresní Archiv et al., 2000), 44.

man from Prague, a radical Taborite, and an undecided third party, the figure of the Taborite is given the following words:²⁵

Look what Maccabeus and his brothers accomplished, how bravely they used their swords. They dispatched all sinners from the world and freed all faithful Jews from pagan captivity. That is just what we, as well, wish to bravely do; and we think that when we act that way we are led by the Holy Scriptures.

At the same time, inferring a broad recognition of the Maccabees as models for God's new warriors from a biased account of the Taborites' position written by their opponents would be to infer falsely. In the voluminous *Confessio Taboritarum* of 1431, references to the Maccabean books are very rare. The text's author was the Taborites' "chief ideologue" and main theologian of the 1420s and 30s, Nicholas of Pelhřimov, named Biskupec; he considered the Maccabean model not to be binding for Christians in the era of the New Testament. In addition, he observed, the books were not part of the Hebrew biblical canon.²⁶ Similarly to Jakoubek of Stříbro's position, that of Nicholas Biskupec, is grounded in pastoral concerns. At the start of the Hussite wars, the Bohemian theologians had grappled intensively with the problem of "just" and "holy" warfare. They were aware that, in a just war, the salvation of the souls of the *bellatores* was especially endangered. While the most radical groups were certainly inclined toward the Maccabean model, both theologians declined to take it up as a template for their own warfare. Rather, they branded it as a form of abuse associated with the evil habits of mercenaries, abuse that they tried to combat in their didactic texts.²⁷

²⁵ Svejkovský, *Veršované skladby doby husitské*, 145: *Znamenaj, co Machabeus a jeho bratříe jsú páchali, / kterak sú statečně svými meči máchali; / shladili s světa hříšné lidi, / vysvobodili od pohanstva všecky věrné Židy. / Tohož my se statečně držíme, / že právě vedeni písmem, to súdíme.*

²⁶ *Confessio Taboritarum*, ed. Amedeo Molnár and Romolo Cegna, vol. 105, *Fonti per la storia d'Italia* (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1983), 211: *Ex illo enim 2^o Machabeorum 12 de Iuda non probatur, quod nunc pro tempore legis gracie oraciones neccessario debeant fieri a viantibus pro animabus defunctorum. Nam secundum Bartholomeum Brixiensem super distincione Canones libri Machabeaorum apocryfi dicuntur, nec habentur in canone Hebreorum; in quibus quamvis inveniuntur utilia, non tamen obligamur omnia in eis contenta acceptare*; cf. also 230.

²⁷ Cf. Howard Kaminsky, "Nicholas of Pelhřimov's Tabor: An Adventure into the Eschaton," in *Eschatologie und Hussitismus: Internationale Kolloquium*, Prag, 1.–4. September 1993, ed. Alexander Patschovsky and František Šmahel, vol. 1, *Historica: Supplementum* (Prague: Historisches Institut, 1996), 139–167; Norman Housley,

The situation is different with John of Příbram's tractate of 1421, laconically titled *De bello*. The work has been known to historians and is partly available in a commentated edition.²⁸ However, this only contains the author's core ideas. The exegetical argumentation is omitted in the edition, a fact that has hindered both a critical evaluation and contextualizing of the text. John of Příbram called for a high moral standard from the Hussite "warriors of God." Their struggle was to be a just one, together with their intentions. As examples of such just warriors for God, the author refers us to every conceivably exemplary Old Testament warrior, individuals who fought not for themselves and earthly things but for God and faith. Today's warriors for God as well, he indicates, should follow God's will. And they should gain certainty about what God's will is from studying Holy Scriptures and praying, as did Josaphat, David, and Joshua before them.²⁹

In distinction to Jakoubek of Stříbro, who considered warfare an inappropriate way to resolve conflicts even when it was defensive, John of Příbram had a positive attitude to holy war. Indeed, waging such war is a duty for everyone venerating God's law,³⁰ and divine inspiration to that effect should stand above orders from any worldly authority. For in contrast to divine inspiration, a royal order can be resisted if it contradicts the principles of a just war. As an example, John of Příbram cites Julian the Apostate, whom the text places close to King Sigismund of Luxemburg.³¹

Religious Warfare in Europe, 1400–1536 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 45–50, 161–170.

²⁸ Jaroslav Goll, *Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Böhmischen Brüder*, vol. 2: *Petr Chelčický und seine Lehre* (Prague: J. Otto, 1882), 56–57.

²⁹ *Tercio ad iustum bellum requiritur, ne quis procedat ad bellum et os domini non interroget, sive asidua oracione usque revelacionem, sive in legis die meditacione aut inquisicione usque ad informacionem.* Österreichische Nationalbibliothek [ÖNB] 4302, fol. 192r. The corresponding biblical passages follow: 2 Chron 18:3–5; 1 Kings 30:6–8; Jos 9:14–23.

³⁰ *Secundo ad iustum bellum requiritur, ut persona sit ad bella licenciata legitime. Hoc vero dupliciter accidit, vel Deo auctore in bella cogente, vel homine superiore legitima potestate imperante. De primo dicitur in Canone XXIII. Questione V^a Remittuntur per ambonem, quod aliquando per scientes peccata puniuntur, sicut per filios Israel voluit Deus peccata punire Ammorreorum et Cananeorum et aliarum gentium, quarum terram Israelitis possidendam dedit.* ÖNB 4302, fol. 191v. Cf. *Decretum Gratiani*, C. 23.5.49, *Corpus Iuris Canonici I. Decretum magistri Gratiani*, ed. Aemilius Friedberg (Leipzig: Bernard Tauchnitz, 1879), col. 946.

³¹ ÖNB 4302, fol. 193r. Cf. *Decretum Gratiani*, C. 11.3.94, *Corpus Iuris Canonici I*, col. 669.

In the second part of the tractate, references to the Maccabean books accumulate. Sacrificing one's own life for God's law, we read, is an ideal justifying just warfare. One condition for a just war is defending the truth. We learn this from the example of Mattathias, who stood opposed to tyrants and exhorted his sons to be steadfast.³² In the last paragraph, John of Příbram has Judas Maccabeus speak up directly,³³ uttering a call to battle with proto-national traits.³⁴ The battle is aimed at defense of homeland and compatriots together with protection of the threatened reformist community, which since the 1420s began increasingly viewing itself as God's chosen people.³⁵ Victory will be achieved, we are informed, through heavenly support alone; none of God's warriors need be afraid, for God will place all enemies in the hands of the just, fighting for their souls' salvation and His laws.³⁶ Hence, despite all reservations on the part of the exegetically schooled Prague theologians, during the crusades, the Maccabean books even had resonance for the Hussites. In this situation, the fact seems to have been forgotten that the crusaders made use of the same figures and

³² ÖNB 4302, fol. 193v–194r: *Attendere eciam veri et iusti bellatores debent illum strenuissimum Mathatiam Machabeum, de quo primo Machabeorum 2, qui videns mala, que faciebat Anthiochus, dixit: 'Ve mihi, ut quid natus sum, videre contricionem populi mei et contricionem civitatis sancte et sedere illic, cum datur in manibus inimicorum [1 Macc 2:7]. Cum autem vellet mori, dixit filiis suis: 'Nunc ergo, o filii, emulatores estote legis... [1 Macc 2:49–53, 57–58]'*.

³³ ÖNB 4302, fol. 194r: *Quod autem patria sit defendenda, patet primi Machabeorum 3: Et ait Judas: "Accingimini et estote filii potentes et estote parati mane, ut pungnetis [sic!] adversus naciones has, que convenerunt disperdere nos et sancta nostra, quoniam melius est nos mori in bello, quam videre mala gentis nostre et sanctorum. Sicut autem fuerit voluntas in celo, sic fiat." [1 Macc 3:58–60] Et 2. Machabeorum XIII. dicitur, quod Judas precepit populo, ut die ac nocte dominum invocaret, quod sicut semper et nunc adiuvalet eos, quippe qui lege et patria sanctoque templo privari vererentur... [1 Macc 13:10–14]*

³⁴ ÖNB 4302, fol. 194r: *...ad defensionem patrie et fratrum iustorum conpatriotarum adversus externos patriam destruere volentes. Cf. Goll, Quellen und Untersuchungen, 57.*

³⁵ Rudolf Urbánek, "Český mesianismus ve své době hrdinské," in *idem, Z husitského věku: Výbor historických úvah a studií* (Prague: Nakl. ČSAV, 1957), 7–28; František Šmahel, "The Idea of the 'Nation' in Hussite Bohemia," *Historica* 16 (1969): 143–247 and *Historica* 17 (1970): 93–197.

³⁶ ÖNB 4302, fol. 194r: *Facile est concludi multos in manu paucorum et non est diferencia Deo celi liberare in multis et in paucis, quoniam non in multitudine exercitus victoria belli, sed de celo fortitudo est. Ipsi veniunt ad nos in multitudine contumaci et superbia, ut disperdant nos et uxores nostras et filios nostros et ut spolient nos, nos vero pugnabimus pro animabus nostris et legibus nostris et ipse dominus conteret eos ante faciem nostram. Vos ergo ne timueritis eos! [1 Macc 3:18–22].*

argumentative patterns to legitimize their “holy war.” In the end, not the crusaders but the Hussites were honored: they managed to maintain their own faith, the new utraquistic confession. Whether this was due to God’s help or their military prowess is not clear. This question, however, cannot be answered by a historian.

EARLY MODERN PERIOD

THE RENAISSANCE OF THE MACCABEES:
OLD TESTAMENT JEWS, GERMAN HUMANISTS, AND THE
CULT OF THE SAINTS IN EARLY MODERN COLOGNE¹

David J. Collins, S.J.

One of the few instances of Old Testament figures being fully venerated as saints in the medieval Latin West can be found in Cologne. The Hebrew saints in question are the seven brothers and their mother, whose torture and execution, as described in 2 Maccabees 7, was ordered by the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes (ruled 175–164 B.C.E.) on account of their refusal to eat pork in violation of Mosaic law. Their cult – the range of ways that medieval Christians could venerate them and that could encompass rituals and sacred objects (written, archeological, and artistic) – included numerous typical elements: their reputed bodily remains (relics) were deposited in sacred vessels and reserved in altars; churches and monasteries were consecrated to them; learned devotees composed several “passions,” accounts of their martyrdom; donors gave financial support and lent prestige to the cult; and public and cloistered celebrations were scheduled on ecclesiastical calendars.² The goal of such activity was, of course, complex. At face value it was to render honor to the Maccabean martyrs and through them to God; to encourage hope for divine favor through the saints’ intercession; and to inspire admiration, religious fervor, and at some level, imitation among those who participated in the rites and heard the stories of the saints’ virtues. An active cult could also bring prestige

¹ The author undertook the research for this article with funding from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, to which he expresses his thanks. Important abbreviations used in this article are the following: ADB = *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*; DDB = *Diözesan – und Dombibliothek*, NDB = *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, VD16 = *Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1983–).

² Société des Bollandistes, ed. *Acta sanctorum quotquot to orbe coluntur* (Antwerp and Brussels, 1643–) Aug. 1: 5C-12B. See also Max Maas, “Die Maccabäer als christliche Heilige,” *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums* 44 (1900): 152–155.

and other benefits to the institutions and persons professing special affiliation with the saints and the cultic venues related to them.³

The veneration of these Maccabees as saints in Cologne can be traced back to the eleventh century, when records indicate that a monastery of Benedictine nuns was located there under their patronage.⁴ There is, however, little evidence of interest in the Old Testament figures beyond the monastery walls until the end of the fifteenth century. Between 1490 and 1530 there was a marked increase in activity surrounding the cult: the convent was extensively renovated, several major works of art were commissioned for the monastery with the martyrs as their theme, and three printed works about them along with a luxury manuscript were produced. The wide range of artists, writers, and patrons who participated in this activity and the bestowal of honors on the Maccabees outside the monastery offer evidence of

³ Since 1996 four scholars have addressed various aspects of the cult of the Maccabee martyrs in Cologne. In his biographical dissertation on Johannes Cincinnius, Andreas Freitäger includes consideration of the Werden librarian's contribution to the 1525 manuscript as a humanist hagiographer. In his historical-theological dissertation and a subsequent monograph on the Maccabee warriors and martyrs in medieval Jewish and Christian understanding, Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski investigates how a Christian supersessionist theology undergirded the Cologne cult. In several venues, Ursula Rautenberg has written on the implications of printing for the cult. And in lectures held at the University of Eichstätt and since published, Klaus Scheiner has analyzed the cult in the context of the general medieval Christian interest in warriors, martyrs, and peacemakers. Andreas Freitäger, *Johannes Cincinnius von Lippstadt (ca. 1485–1555): Bibliothek und Geisteswelt eines westfälischen Humanisten*, Veröffentlichungen der historischen Kommission für Westfalen, vol. 18 (Münster: Aschendorff, 2000); Daniel E. Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, "The Maccabean Martyrs in Medieval Christianity and Judaism" (Ph. D. Dissertation, Boston College, 2005) and *Christian Memories of the Maccabean Martyrs* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Ursula Rautenberg, "Medienkonkurrenz und Medienmischung – Zur Gleichzeitigkeit von Handschriften und Druck im ersten Viertel des 16. Jahrhunderts in Köln," in *Die Gleichzeitigkeit von Handschrift und Buchdruck*, ed. Gerd Diche and Klaus Grubmüller (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003); Ursula Rautenberg, *Überlieferung und Druck: Heiligenlegenden aus frühen Kölner Offizinen*, vol. 30, Frühe Neuzeit: Studien und Dokumente zur deutschen Literatur und Kultur im europäischen Kontext (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1996); and Klaus Schreiner, *Märtyrer, Schlachtenhelfer, Friedenstifter*, vol. 18, Otto-von-Freising-Vorlesungen der Katholischen Universität Eichstätt (Opladen: Leske und Budrich, 2000). Although my attention to both the humanist dimension and narrative development distinguishes my analysis from their own, my work was also made easier by theirs, a dependence I acknowledge with gratitude. Where I have disagreed with any or all of them – concerning the anti-Jewish elements of the cult, the origins and impact of humanist participation in the cult, etc. – it should be understood in the context of an overarching appreciation for their work.

⁴ Theodor Ilgen, "Kritische Beiträge zur rheinisch-westfälischen Quellenkunde des Mittelalters," *Westdeutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kunst* 30 (1911): 224–231.

the cult's growing popularity in the archdiocese; and there are several indications that the martyred family became generally recognized as the city's third set of principal patron saints, joining the Three Kings and Saint Ursula with her 11,000 martyred companions.

The principal aim of this chapter is to describe and explain this intensification of cultic interest in the context of the religious and intellectual culture in which it occurred. Three overarching issues critical to our understanding of that early sixteenth century world intersect at the cult in suggestive ways. The first issue has to do with late medieval devotional culture. A characteristic of late medieval religion was heightened devotion to the saints, evidence for which can be found across Latin Christendom. This obvious point, however, does not in itself explain the interest in the Maccabees in the period between 1490 and 1530 in Cologne, a city renowned in the Middle Ages for its abundance of saints and relics. Many of these attracted little attention in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; their veneration might have been animated, but was not. A variety of contingencies distinguished the Maccabee cult from the others. Two bear mentioning here since we will return to them recurrently in the following pages. The first was the participation of Elias Mertz (1460s–1527), a secular priest, who served the convent in several capacities beginning in 1491. Mertz was involved in the production of every piece of architectural, artistic, and documentary evidence for new Maccabee veneration during the period in question. Without his efforts, the cult would not have enjoyed the attention it received in the early sixteenth century.

The other contingent factor was a set of relics from the martyrs, which the Cologne nuns claimed – credibly, by contemporaneous reckoning – to have in their possession. On this point it is worth recalling the notion of *praesentia*, to which Peter Brown has drawn attention in his seminal work *The Cult of the Saints*,⁵ and which highlights the significance of the location of relics in ancient and medieval Christianity. Relics were a sign of and a channel for God's power in the world. They gave a saint's devotees a point on which to focus their fervor, and aspirations; and the strongest claim could be staked to association with particular saints on the basis of possession of their relics. The notion of *praesentia* serves to remind us that in the eleventh century,

⁵ Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 88.

the incidental placement of the presumed relics in a particular monastery fulfilled an unanticipated but necessary precondition for the swell of artistic and literary attention that Mertz organized at the convent nearly five centuries later, and that is here the focus of analysis.

The second and third background issues have to do with Renaissance humanists. Other than those by Mertz, the literary contributions to the cult in this period were made by humanists, Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466/67–1536) being the most famous of them. The cult was already unusual for its object; the humanists' part in animating it makes it all the more intriguing since until recently modern scholarship has tended to impute, *tout court*, a skeptical stance to them regarding the cult of the saints. Although that modern imputation is being increasingly proven an exaggeration, indeed an outright inaccuracy,⁶ an alternate understanding of how and why they – in so many respects the most self-consciously new thinkers of the Renaissance – were attracted to the time-worn and quintessentially medieval cult of the saints remains to be developed. Consideration of their participation in Cologne's devotion to the Maccabees will contribute to the formulation of an answer.

A humanist contribution to the veneration of Old Testament figures in Cologne in the 1510s also conjures up an ominous specter that is the third background issue. At precisely the time when we find the most humanist activity surrounding this cult, the Holy Roman Empire – above all its men of letters, lawyers, and churchmen – was embroiled in an especially notorious “Jewish problem” known as the Reuchlin-Pfefferkorn controversy. This coincidence is of interest to us for several reasons: an aspect of the complex affair had to do with the preservation of Hebrew books, Cologne became a staging point for the controversy, and three of the humanists who contributed to the Maccabean cult, among them Ortwinus Gratius (ca. 1480–1542), were aligned on the side of the baptized Jew Johannes Pfefferkorn (1469–1523), the nemesis of the celebrated humanist and Hebrew language scholar Johannes Reuchlin (1455–1522). An additional aim of

⁶ David J. Collins, *Reforming Saints: Saints' Lives and Their Authors in Germany, 1470–1530*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Alison Knowles Frazier, *Possible Lives: Authors and Saints in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); and Gabriela Signori, “Humanisten, heilige Gebeine, Kirchenbücher und Legenden erzählende Bauern: Zur Geschichte der vorreformatorischen Heiligen- und Reliquienverehrung,” *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 26 (1999): 203–244.

this paper is therefore to consider the extent to which the Reuchlin-Pfefferkorn controversy bore on humanist participation in the cult of the Jewish holy family.

In the following pages, I will first describe and analyze the elements of increased activity surrounding the cult between 1490 and 1530 and then develop the links between that activity and the larger issues sketched above. In the final analysis, the veneration shows, first, that humanists participated intimately in common medieval devotions; second, that their participation was like the participation of other learned medieval and early modern Christians insofar as they used the cult of the saints to address matters of great moment and common human experience; and third, that devotional tendencies developed along with and were shaped by broader cultural trends.

1

Although humanist engagement in Cologne's veneration of the Maccabees does not become obvious until the mid 1510s, hints of it can be noted as early as 1491.⁷ Prompted by the archbishop Hermann of Hesse (r. 1480–1508), the Maccabee convent joined the Bursfeld Confederation,⁸ one of several larger, late medieval confederations of reform-minded monasteries. Bursfeld's member monasteries committed themselves to strict rules of the common life, especially regarding enclosure, liturgy, and poverty. For the sake of a more vigorous reform, individual communities also yielded some traditional autonomy to the confederation, allowing for visitations from external inspection committees and the occasional appointment of abbots and abbesses from outside the given community. Bursfeld monasteries commonly incorporated devotions such as the cult of the saints into their liturgical practices; and, although the congregation did not generally encourage

⁷ The Florentine-born humanist Lapo da Castiglionchio (ca 1406–1438) wrote the *Iosepi Macabeicorum liber*, a paraphrase of the Fourth Book of the Maccabees. His prefatory letter was dated March 1437. I have examined a digitalization of the Paris manuscript: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. lat. 1616, ff. 1–16. See also, Frazier, *Possible Lives*, 86, 436–437.

⁸ Elke-Ursel Hammer, *Monastische Reform zwischen Person und Institution: Zum Wirken des Abtes Adam Meyer von Groß St. Martin in Köln (1454–1499)*, vol. 165, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 396.

advanced education for its monks, some monasteries attracted and produced learned monks and even became centers of learning.⁹

Upon its reception into the Bursfeld Congregation, the Maccabee convent was placed under the supervision of the abbots of the imperial monastery in Werden, north of Cologne. The Werden abbey had been an active participant in the Bursfeld reform since 1478; and both abbots in the period under consideration in this article, Antonius Grimholt (r. 1484–1517) and Johannes Groningen (r. 1517–1540), exhibited clear humanist sympathies, including in their employment of the humanist Johannes Cincinnius as abbey librarian (ca. 1485–1555).¹⁰ Both Groningen and Cincinnius, as we will later see, became involved in fostering Cologne's Maccabee cult.

In conjunction with the reforms at the Maccabee convent in 1491, Elias Mertz, who had studied and taught at the university in Cologne and who had assisted the archbishop in his reform of other monasteries in the archdiocese, was named rector of the convent church and ghostly father to the nuns, offices that he held until his death.¹¹ Mertz was the prime instigator of the invigorated cult. He commissioned much new artwork, composed two long vernacular poems, recruited donors and patrons, and enlisted numerous humanists in its support.¹² Although it is frequently suggested in scholarly literature that Mertz

⁹ The Abbot Johannes Trithemius may be considered such a monk: before becoming active in the Bursfeld Congregation, he was trained in the *humaniora*. As a leading member of the movement, he was active in humanist circles; he was a prolific author of letters, treatises, and other texts on all matters of religion and culture; and he penned several saints' lives, including two at the request of the archbishop of Mainz, Albert of Brandenburg, in honor of predecessors. Noting that few Bursfeld monks were ever sent to university and that Trithemius himself lamented this tendency, Harald Müller persuasively cautions against evaluating the relationship between monasticism and humanism too generously: Harald Müller, *Habit und Habitus: Mönche und Humanisten im Dialog* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 97–100, 192–244. Regarding the Bursfeld Congregation in general, see Petrus Becker, "Benediktinische Reformbewegungen und klösterliches Bildungsstreben: Die rheinischen Abteien der Bursfelder Kongregation," *Rottenburger Jahrbuch für Kirchengeschichte* 11 (1992): 161–174; Kaspar Elm, "Monastische Reformen zwischen Humanismus und Reformation," in *900 Jahre Kloster Bursfelde*, ed. Lothar Perlt (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1994), 59–11.

¹⁰ Wilhelm Stüwer, *Die Reichsabtei Werden an der Ruhr*, vol. 12, *Germania Sacra*, n.s. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co, 1980), 342–345.

¹¹ Elias Mertz is also referred to as Helias Marcaeus and Helias de Luna. The rectorate was in this instance likely a role with pastoral and sacramental tasks.

¹² Paul Clemen, "Das Benediktinerinnenkloster zu den Hl. Machabäern," in *Die Kunstdenkmäler der Stadt Köln – Die ehemaligen Kirchen, Klöster, Hospitäler, und Schulbauten*, ed. idem (Düsseldorf: L. Schwann, 1937), 253–264; and Manfred Groten,

was a humanist, this judgment overreaches the evidence. There is no indication of his being trained in the *humaniora*, and neither his own literary efforts – all in the vernacular and otherwise not classical in form – nor his employment suggest humanist inclination or talent. At the same time, we might infer from where and when he was educated that he absorbed some humanist learning; and throughout his adulthood he had a number of prominent humanist acquaintances, including Johannes Trithemius and Erasmus.¹³ Taken as a whole, the evidence allows only for the more cautious judgment that Mertz, like many of his learned contemporaries, although not a humanist, was appreciative of the humanist classicizing style, sympathetic to its practitioners, and – as I argue concerning his strategies to invigorate the Maccabean cult – convinced of the persuasive and popularizing power of the humanist style in broader society.

Mertz's obligations at the monastery included tending to the nuns' material needs. In 1462 a fire had destroyed large parts of the monastery and thirty years later repairs had barely moved towards completion. Mertz devoted himself to the renovation of the monastery buildings. An early indicator that he had taken the task of repair to heart was his ceremonial removal of sacred articles from the main altar in the convent church in 1504. The articles included reliquaries of the Maccabees and other saints as well as documents on the monastery's history. Mertz commissioned a new reliquary for the Maccabees, and later authors who wrote about the convent and the cult at Mertz's request claimed to have relied on the documents, which are no longer extant.¹⁴

Three years later, the first new devotional, literary work about the Maccabees appeared in print. Authored by Mertz himself, "The Suffering of the Holy Maccabees and the Indulgences of Maviren in Cologne" consists of over 400 rhyming couplets in a German vernacular.¹⁵ Two

"Zur Entstehung des Benediktinerinnenklosters zu den Machabäern in Köln," in *Aus Überrest und Tradition*, ed. Peter Engels (Erlangen: Europaforum, 1999), 156–173.

¹³ ADB 20: 294. Ilgen, "Kritische Beiträge," 232, 238.

¹⁴ For Ortwinus Gratius' explanation of how the documents on which he based a history of the convent and relics were found, see Cologne, DDB, ms 271, fol. 122 [recto verso]. Marion Grams-Thieme, "Der Makkabäerschrein," *Colonia Romanica* 5 (1990): 101; Karen Künstler-Brandstädter, "St. Makkabäer," in *Kölner Kirchen und ihre mittelalterliche Ausstattung*, *Colonia Romanica* (Cologne: Greven, 1999), 46.

¹⁵ VD16 L7734: Elias "Marcaeus" Mertz, *Dat lyden der hilger Machabeen und afflaes tzo Mauyren bynnen Colen* (Cologne: Johann Landen, 1507). I have worked from a digital reproduction of the copy held in Cologne at the Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek

woodcuts illustrate the little book.¹⁶ On the first page, there is an image of the mother surrounded by her seven sons in the midst of being tortured (see figure 1). Despite the mutilations they have undergone, all look serenely joyful as Antiochus' servants stoke the fire underneath the boiling cauldron in which the family sits. The other image appears on the last page and features a woman with a cloak spread over and protecting seven smaller male figures in medieval garb (see figure 2). The ambiguity of the woman's identity in the latter image betrays a tactic on Mertz's part shaping aspects of subsequent written works as well, namely, enhancement of the Maccabees' significance by associating them with Cologne's other important female protector-saints: the woman could be the Virgin Mary, who was frequently featured in the late Middle Ages with her cape spread protectively over the faithful. She could also be Saint Ursula, the fourth-century British princess killed by Huns in Cologne and featured frequently in this pose with her 11,000 martyred companions. Or she could just as easily be the mother of the Maccabees, who – as Mertz proposed – belonged to the pantheon of Cologne's holy protectors no less than the Virgin Mary and Saint Ursula.¹⁷

Mertz's casting of the Maccabees in this first poem was not particularly innovative. Printed by Johann Landen (1463–1516), a frequent publisher of spiritual and ascetic tracts written in the vernacular,

under the call number AD+BL575. A linguistically modified transcription is also available in, *Geistliche Gedichte des XIV. und XV. Jahrhunderts vom Niederrhein*, ed. Oskar Schade (Hannover: Carl Rümpler, 1854), 366–394. Mertz's name appears nowhere in the codex; thus his authorship is inferred. The Maccabee passion is found from A-1-r to C-1-r, and includes a description of Antiochus' ignominious end. The story of the discovery and translation of the relics is found from C-1-v to C-2-r. A description of their reliquary follows. And from C-3-v to C-6-r, the work concludes with a listing of indulgences (the "afflaes") associated with Maviren, as Mertz explains, a word referring both to the quarter within Cologne where the Maccabee monastery was located, and where by tradition Saint Ursula and her companions were murdered, and to the Maccabee mother: "Der plaen was genant der bloet acker dair na Mauren / Wyll ich unss beduden zo duytsch in schrifftlicher manieren // As die hilge lichamen tzo der stat melaen weren komen / Den naemen der moder hatte aldae nye mynsh vernomen // Dan durch eyr unverwynlich gemoede sulcher moder / spijssen eyr kynder in doetlicher noet seuen broder // Sulchs wonder wart die moder genant Mauren / Sprych tzo latijne mater virorum eyr tzo hogen eren // Groesse geleyrde meister machen van tzoen worden eyn / Eyr kenst up dat kortzste tzo bewysen in dat gemeyn."

¹⁶ Mertz, *Dat lyden der hilger Machabeen*, A-1-r and C-6-r.

¹⁷ Rautenberg, "Medienkonkurrenz," 118.



Figure 1. "The Seven Maccabee Brothers with Their Mother in the Boiling Cauldron," in Elias "Marcaeus" Mertz, *Dat lyden der hilger Machabeen und afflaes tzo Mauryren bynnē Colen* (Cologne: Johann Landen, 1507), A-1-r. The image, taken from Cologne, USB AD+BL 575. The image is reproduced with the permission of the Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek, Cologne.



Figure 2. "A Holy Woman with Her Cape Spread Protectively," in Elias "Marcaeus" Mertz, *Dat lyden der hilger Machabeen und afflaes tzo Mauyren bynnen Colen* (Cologne: Johann Landen, 1507), C-6-v. The image, taken from Cologne, USB AD+BL 575, is reproduced with the permission of the Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek, Cologne.

including ever-popular writings about saints,¹⁸ the text and woodcuts (of unknown origin) conformed to conventional devotional models. Indeed, Mertz's description of the martyrdom fit a mainstream tradition of Christian approaches to dying for the faith: Antiochus Epiphanes and his advisors are cruelly unjust and blinded by irreligious insanity; the victims are courageously uncompromising, at moments serenely joyful in the face of excruciating suffering, at moments aggressively insolent to their torturers. The modern reader is immediately confronted with, and repulsed by, the brutality of Mertz's story-telling. There is not a ligament torn or a limb mutilated that he did recount in vigorous rhyming couplet. One is, at least at first, thoroughly sympathetic with the poem's first modern editor, who in 1854 called it "slaughterhouse poesy" and suggested that for that very reason it be forgotten.¹⁹ Such an ahistorical reaction risks distracting us from another likely tactic Mertz used to popularize the Maccabees: the aesthetics of late medieval piety – that is, the principles and praxes of portrayal – could be grisly indeed, as a glance to the contemporaneous Crucifixions of Matthias Grünewald (1470–1528) indicates. By that token we can imagine that the gore, regardless of whether it attracted or repulsed the medieval audience, made the martyrdom of the Maccabees familiar to devotees who associated a similar gore with Christ on the cross and martyrs in ancient coliseums. In short, the narrative carnage made the Maccabees more like Christian martyrs, and thus for the actual and potential devotees more familiar to venerate.

In addition to associating the Maccabees with Cologne's most important patron saints and to shaping their death in typically grisly, if salvific, ways, Mertz brought the Old Testament martyrs into the world of late medieval piety by highlighting an apocalyptic theme in the accounts of their suffering and death. Apocalyptic thinking – the conviction that the last stage of history would be marked by a furious conflict between the forces of good and evil – like "slaughterhouse" piety, was a hallmark of fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century religion in the Empire.²⁰ The clearest apocalyptic expression in the poem is

¹⁸ ADB 14: 464; NDB 10: 559. Rautenberg, *Überlieferung*, U III.2, U IV.2.2, U IV.2.4, MB I.1, MB I.2.

¹⁹ "Schlachthauspoesie" *Geistliche Gedichte*, ed. Schade, 363.

²⁰ Heinz-Dieter Heimann, "Antichristvorstellungen im Wandel der mittelalterlichen Gesellschaft: Zum Umgang mit einer Angst- und Hoffnungssignatur zwischen theologischer Formalisierung und beginnender politischer Propaganda," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 47 (1995): 99–113; Bernard McGinn, "Portraying

Mertz's identification of Antiochus as a foreshadowing of the Antichrist. As evidence, Mertz underscores the king's savagery to the Maccabees, his tyrannical way with his own subjects, his stubborn resistance to the divine law, and – most evocatively of all – his conquest of Jerusalem, a sure sign of the future Antichrist for apocalyptically attuned Christians. Although Mertz had drawn the apocalyptic leitmotif from earlier medieval texts,²¹ it was not a theme adopted into the medieval Maccabee literature universally: it does not surface in the metrical passions of the thirteenth-century bishops Hildebert of Tours and Marbod of Rennes,²² for example, nor in the above-noted paraphrase of 4 Maccabees prepared by the Florentine-born humanist Lapo da Castiglionchio.

A final element in Mertz's work that reveals the devotional framework in which he wished to make the Maccabees attractive is the appendix of indulgences. The indulgences he lists are assigned to the church ("Maviren" in the title of the poem refers to the urban area where the monastery was located). Indulgences – understood as an articulation of spiritual benefits, quantified in terms of penitential days applied against purgatorial suffering – became increasingly important in the devotional life of late medieval Christians. Mertz's explication of them in relation to the Maccabee cult was thus a signal to potential devotees of the importance of the holy site, which could be measured by the abundance of indulgences attached to the church and of the spiritual benefits to be won by those who held the Maccabees in honor.²³

Mertz's efforts to enhance the Maccabees' dignity met with success in the city at large. The clearest evidence of this is to be found in art

Antichrist in the Middle Ages," in *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages*, ed. Werner Verbeke et al., vol. 15, *Mediaevalia Lovaniensia* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1988), 1–48; and Marjorie Reeves, "Pattern and Purpose in History in the Later Medieval and Renaissance Periods," in *Apocalypse Theory and the Ends of the World*, ed. Malcol Bull (Oxford: Blackwell 1995), 90–111.

²¹ Kevin L. Hughes, *Constructing Antichrist* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 178–239.

²² *Venerabilis Hildeberti primo Cenomanensis episcopi, deinde Turonensis archiepiscopi opera. Accesserunt Marbodi Redonensis episcopi ipsius Hildeberti supparis opuscula*, ed. Antoine Beaugendre (Paris: Laurentius le Conte, 1708).

²³ Mertz, *Das lyden der hilger Machabeen*, C-3-v–C-6-r. See Christiane Neuhausen, "Köln und der Kirchenbau: Beispiele zur Instrumentalisierung des Ablasswesens," in *Studien zum 15. Jahrhundert*, ed. Johannes Helmuth, et al. (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1994), 1005–1016.

decorating a diocesan missal published four times between 1514 and 1525. The title page features the principal patron saints of the archdiocese in three tiers (see figure 3): uppermost, the Three Kings adore the Christ Child; in the middle, Saint Ursula extends her cape in protection of her martyred virgin-companions; bottommost, the Maccabean mother and her seven sons seethe in the cauldron. The missal itself was prepared on commission from the Cologne Kreuzherren, whose monastery exercised considerable influence over the devotional and liturgical life in the city. That they featured the Maccabees so prominently in the missal is an indication of Mertz's success at stimulating interest in the Maccabees beyond the convent that employed him.²⁴

Even with this significant success, however, Mertz continued investing energy into the cult. Three years after the first appearance of the Cologne missal, he published a second metrical passion, "Saint Solomona, Martyred with Her Seven Maccabee Children and Prefiguring the Sorrows of Mary and the Sufferings of Her Child Jesus."²⁵ Like the earlier poem, Mertz composed it in a German vernacular, and Johann Landen published it. It was decorated with new wood cuts, was composed in rhyming couplets, followed the conventional story line, and concluded with an appendix of indulgences. The four principal devotional characteristics of the first poem discussed above mark the second poem as well.

Emphases, however, had shifted. The title points to one of these, indicating the more prominent figure of Solomona, as the mother was

²⁴ The press of Wolfgang Hopyl in Paris, commissioned by the Cologne printer Franz Birkmann in conjunction with Cologne's monastery of Kreuzherren (from the *Ordo Sanctae Crucis*, also known as "Cruciferi"), produced four editions of the *Missale diocesis Coloniense* between 1514 and 1525. The Bibliothèque Nationale de France holds two copies of the rare 1514 first edition: Tolbiac, Rez de jardin, magasin, Velins-24 and B-806. The Diözesan- und Dombibliothek in Cologne holds a copy of the third edition (1520) with the call number Frühdruck 217. Regarding the missal, see Joachim Plotzek, M. et al., eds., *Glaube und Wissen im Mittelalter: Die Kölner Dombibliothek* (Munich: Hirmer, 1998), 499–500; Rautenberg, "Medienkonkurrenz," 169. Regarding the Cruciferi and their literary and artistic activities in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see Kaspar Elm, "Kreuzherren," in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, CD-ROM edition (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2000), 5: 1500–1501; Robert Haaß, "Die Kreuzherren in den Rheinlanden," *Rheinisches Archiv* 23 (1932): 117–31, and Holger Kempkens, "Hl. Kreuz," in *Kölner Kirchen und ihre mittelalterliche Ausstattung, Colonia Romanica* (Cologne: Greven, 1995), 1: 269–270.

²⁵ VD16 M4848. Elias "Marcaeus" Mertz, *Sent Salomoen martyr myt seven kynden maccabeen figuren der smertz ind druck Marie ind lyden yrs kindes Jesis* (Cologne: Johannes Landen, 1517b). I worked from a digital reproduction of the copy held in Cracow, Bibliotheca Jagellonica under the call number Yg 6377 (6).



Figure 3. Title Page of the *Missale diocesis Coloniensis* (Paris: Wolfgang Hopyl, 1520), 5^r. The image, taken from Cologne, DDB Frühdruck 217, is reproduced with the permission of the Diözesan- und Dombibliothek, Cologne.

called, and similarities between her and the Virgin Mary. The new images further developed the analogizing between the passions of the Maccabees and of Christ: in addition to the two woodcuts appearing in the 1507 work, thirteen additional wood cuts by an unknown artist decorate the 1517 work. Eleven of these draw parallels between the two passions explicitly: in one the crucified Christ and the Mater Dolorosa, her heart pierced with seven swords, hover over Maccabees in the boiling cauldron (see figure 4).²⁶ In others, medallions depicting episodes from the passion of Christ are inserted above scenes of the Maccabee passion: in this way Christ's scourging is associated with the Maccabees' scourging before Antiochus;²⁷ the nailing of Christ's hands and feet to the cross with the amputation of the Maccabees' hands and feet (see figure 5);²⁸ Christ's entombment with the Maccabees' burial;²⁹ the Resurrection with the exhumation of the Maccabees' remains;³⁰ and so forth. The artwork of the woodcuts derived from a larger artwork, commissioned by Mertz and already hanging in the Maccabee church,³¹ and the correlation of passions was further reiterated in the new reliquary that Mertz commissioned and that was constructed between 1520 and 1527.³²

The actual poetry is also different enough to indicate a thorough reworking on Mertz's part. The overarching story and structure are the same, of course; but from the new emphasis on the analogical relationship between Mary and Solomona to the difference between individual couplets themselves, the second metrical passion is not merely a revision. No couplets from the 1507 poem, for example, are repeated verbatim in the 1517 poem. Reference to Adam and Eve in the earlier poem associates it more strongly with a historical perspective that was suitable to the apocalyptic imagination, while the reference to Antichrist in the later poem offers evidence that Mertz was not abandoning the association altogether. Parallels between Mary and Solomona recur in the older poem, but the association between the two women appears in its own chapters in the later poem, where it is, in general,

²⁶ *Ibid.*, A-iii-r.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, B-i-v.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, D-iv-r.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, F-i-r.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, F-ii-v.

³¹ Rautenberg, *Überlieferung*, 235.

³² Grams-Thieme, "Der Makkabäerschrein," 101; Künstler-Brandstädter, "St. Makkabäer," 2: 46.



Figure 4. "The Crucified and the Mater Dolorosa with the Suffering Maccabees in the Cauldron," in Elias "Marcaeus" Mertz, *Sent Salomoen martyr myt seven kynden maccabeen figuren der smertz ind druck Marie ind lyden yrs Kindes Jesis* (Cologne: Johannes Landen, 1517), 4. The image, taken from Cracow, BJ Yg 6377-6, is reproduced with the permission of the Biblioteka Jagiellonska, Cracow.



Figure 5. "The Maccabees Dismembered with Christ Nailed to the Cross," in Elias "Marcaeus" Mertz, *Sent Salomoen martyr myt seven kynden maccabeen figuren der smertz ind druck Marie ind lyden yrs kindes Jesis* (Cologne: Johannes Landen, 1517), 31. The image, taken from Cracow, BJ Yg 6377-6, is reproduced with the permission of the Biblioteka Jagiellonska, Cracow.

more important. Marginal notations identifying fifteen different biblical, patristic, scholastic, and near-contemporary sources used by Mertz are an especially noteworthy addition to the later volume.³³ Such citations suggest he aspired to meet the higher scholarly expectations of a more learned audience in his second poetic publication.

Finally, the 1517 metrical passion includes several sections that have no equivalent in the earlier work. One series of chapters, for example, develops the association between the Maccabees and Christ in an analogical sense, highlighting in one instance numerological parallels: the traditional seven sorrows of the Blessed Mother are associated with the seven sons whom Solomona watched being executed; these sevens are then associated with the seven sacraments.³⁴ The later poem also includes a letter of dedication, to the princess Sibylle of Brandenburg (1467–1524), widow of William, duke of Jülich-Berg (r. 1475–1511).³⁵ The couple had been generous donors to other ecclesiastical institutions in the region; and the dedication by Mertz, a native of Jülich, may thus have been an attempt to win a new donor to the monastery.³⁶ The new assertion that Solomona was, like Princess Sibylle, a widow belongs to this probable strategy as well.³⁷

2

Within months of the appearance of Mertz's second metrical passion, a different kind of work about the Maccabees appeared in print. It was a compilation of ancient and medieval writings, brought together presumably by Mertz, at the center of which was a medieval Latin paraphrase of the Fourth Book of Maccabees with the title *De imperatrice ratione liber*. The origins of 4 Maccabees can be associated with the Hellenistic Jewish community at or around the turn of the Common Era, that is, with Jews who simultaneously wanted to retain their

³³ See n. 40.

³⁴ Mertz, *Sent Salomoen martyr*, E-ii-r.

³⁵ "Der durchluchtiger hoeggeborner furstynne und frauwen, frauwen Sibillen, geborner Marckgraffynne van Brandenberch, hertzochnyne zo Gulich, zo dem Berge, ind Graffinne zo Ravensberch etc. weduwen." *Ibid.*, A-i-v–A-ii-r. Ortwinus Gratius drew attention to the significance of the dedication in his contribution to the 1527 manuscript. Cologne, DDB, ms 271, fol. 127r.

³⁶ Rautenberg, *Überlieferung*, 235.

³⁷ "Den druck ind lijden der wirdiger ind edeler frauwen moder ind weduwen Sant Salomoen." Mertz, *Sent Salomoen martyr*, A-i-v.

ancestral religion and embraced the Greek philosophical culture that dominated the Ancient Mediterranean world.³⁸ In the Middle Ages the work was incorrectly ascribed to the Roman Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (37–100 C.E.).³⁹ The ancient and medieval Latin church excluded 4 Maccabees, unlike 2 Maccabees, from its biblical canon, but acknowledged its theological and spiritual value. 4 Maccabees, its epitomes, and its revisions circulated widely in manuscript throughout the Middle Ages. The Latin text in Mertz's compilation is also of obscure origin. In a prefatory letter, Erasmus claimed to have edited a pre-existing Latin translation for Mertz; and the Erasmus edition served as the standard Latin version until the nineteenth century.⁴⁰

The rest of the volume encompassed the text of 2 Maccabees⁴¹ and fourteen excerpts from sermons and other writings by ancient and medieval theologians.⁴² The volume concludes with a poem of fifty couplets in honor of the Maccabee mother.⁴³ The woodcuts in the other 1517 publication recur in the edited volume, and the set of sources corresponds to the sources cited in Mertz's poem. On the last page, an unsigned letter to the reader links the preparation of the text to Mertz and to his renovation of the Maccabee convent and church.⁴⁴

³⁸ David A. deSilva, *4 Maccabees* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd., 1998), 14–18.

³⁹ VD16 J992: Elias "Marcaeus" Mertz, ed., *Flavii Iosepi viri Iudaei peri aitokratoros logismoi, hoc est de imperatrice ratione deque inclyto septem fratrum Macabaeorum ac fortissimae eorum matris divae Solomonae martyrio liber* (Cologne: Eucharius Cervicornus, 1517a). Of the three printed codices, only this edited work still exists in any number. The copy at my disposal is located at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich under the call number Res/4° A. gr. b. 804. See also Jakob Freudenthal, *Die Flavius Josephus beigelegte Schrift über die Herrschaft der Vernunft (IV. Makkabäerbuch), eine Predigt aus dem ersten nachchristlichen Jahrhundert* (Breslau: Schletter'sche Buchhandlung [H. Skutsch], 1869).

⁴⁰ For summary analysis of the relationship between Erasmus' text and older medieval Latin texts, the Greek original, and later Latin versions, see Heinrich Dörrie, *Passio ss. Machabaeorum: Die antike lateinische Übersetzung des IV. Makkabäerbuches*, vol. 22, *Abhandlungen der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-histor. Klasse, Dritte Folge* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1938), esp. 5–7, 118–120.

⁴¹ Mertz, ed., *Flavii Iosepi viri Iudaei... liber*, A-ii-r–A-iv-v.

⁴² Cyprian, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, Jerome, Prudentius, Usuardus, Pope Leo I, Hrabanus Maurus, Bernard of Clairvaux, Peter Comestor, Alcinus, John Beleth, Hugh of St. Cher, and Antoninus of Florence. *Ibid.*, E-i-v–H-iiii-r.

⁴³ "In vitam divae Solomones, ad dominum Heliam Marcaeum F. Magdali Iacobi Gaudensis Hecatostichon." *Ibid.*, H-iiii-v–H-vii-v.

⁴⁴ *Habes lector amice laudatissimum Iosepi Iudaei, de septem fratribus Macabaeis eorumque matre libellum, cum aliis (ut vides) quibusdam, sane non aspernandis, ex quibus si quam nactus eris utilitatem, si quid te profecisse cognosces, totum id acceptum referri*

The contributions of Erasmus, the leading humanist north of the Alps, and Jacobus Magdalius (1468/69–ca. 1520), a poet of some repute in Cologne, situate this volume in a humanist orbit. Erasmus highlighted his philological contribution in his prefatory letter to Mertz, while at the same time making the peculiar admission that he had no Greek text against which to compare the Latin translation:

It is my pleasure to offer you, worthy father, the small efforts of a single day. To the extent that I was able, I revised and corrected Josephus' little book on the martyrdom of the seven Maccabee brothers and their strong mother. Had I only been able to satisfy your desire more fully! But I did not have a Greek version at hand and so I made a number of changes, though not many, by reconstructing the Greek from the Latin.⁴⁵

After praising Mertz's fostering of the cult and then Cologne for its fortunate possession of so many valuable relics, Erasmus addresses the spiritual benefit he hopes the city will gain from the invigorated cult, "She can count herself happier yet, if she reproduces the virtues of those whose relics she preserves, if she not only possesses their bodies but keeps herself not unfamiliar with their way of life."⁴⁶ His eloquent conclusion emphasizes these points – the significance of the cult for the city and the imitation of virtue as the true advantage of saintly veneration – in tandem. Considering the Maccabees within the context of the city's two more famous groups of patron saints, Erasmus writes as follows:

All the happier will Cologne be, if she reproduces the virtues of those whose relics she enshrines, and not only holds their bodies but preserves their way of life, imitating in the sincerity of her religious observance the piety [*pietatem synceritate religionis*] of the Three Kings, emulating in her sobriety of life the purity [*puritatem vitae sobrietate*] of the 11,000 virgins, which made them worthy of martyrdom, as well as the constancy of a humble spirit [*animi infracti Constantia*] in those most

par est, optimo illi, nempe optimorum quorumque studiosorumque fautori, Heliae Marcae Macabaetano, collegii divorum Macabaeorum Coloniae moderatori integerrimo, cuius profecto in collegium hoc, cui praeest, tanta actor beneficia esse est manifestum, ut satius omnino sit de eis tacere, quoque pauca dicere, quippe quo templum ipsum, ex subterraneo (ut sic dixerim) aereum, ex squallido immundoque conspicuum, ex luteo pene, lapideum et ut semel dicam, ex minimo tugurioloque persimili, magnificentissimum fecerit, taceo quantus hinc divorum Macabaeorum honori cumulus, quantum toti monasterio utilitatis accesserit. Ibid., H-viii-r.

⁴⁵ Letter 843 as edited in Percy Stafford Allen et al., eds., *Opus epistolarum Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami*, 12 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906–1947), 3: 311–312.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

formidable Maccabee youths and their mother, a heroine whose heart was invincible. Moreover, she can give herself abundantly that greater portion of happiness or even double it. Continue then as you have begun, shed light upon the martyrs' glorious history, and so make their courageous example more familiar and your city's fame more brilliant and inspiring.⁴⁷

Erasmus' turn to the virtues and his identification of *constantia* as the virtue embodied by the Maccabee martyrs points to an important development to which we will soon return.

The other contributor, Jacobus Magdalius,⁴⁸ makes three points in his letter to Mertz, dated June 5, 1517: first, he introduces Mertz to the *De imperatrice ratione* as if for the first time (Mertz must, however, have already known the text, given his reliance on it in the poem of 1517). Second, he offers a brief account of the Maccabee passion, thus displaying his grasp of the classical and biblical sources. Third, he reiterates the argument that the Maccabee passion foreshadowed that of Christ.⁴⁹ Magdalius concludes with thirteen couplets drawing attention to the similar dolours of the Virgin Mary and Solomona.⁵⁰

Magdalius' second contribution, the panegyric "One Hundred Couplets on the Life of the Holy Solomona," was a significant expansion on the distichs he had penned for the letter.⁵¹ The poem celebrates Solomona's maternal virtue in the face of her sons' sufferings and her own, and then explains how their remains came from Antioch through Constantinople to Cologne. By Magdalius' reckoning, the Maccabees died like all Christian martyrs, confident in the justice of God and their everlasting reward; and Solomona consoles her sons with words

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Regarding the wide-spread confusion over the identity of one or several friars named Jacobus Gaudensis and the implicit affirmation in this chapter that there was only one so-named humanist in the Cologne priory at this time, see David J. Collins, "Albertus, Magnus or Magus?: Magic, Natural Philosophy, and Religious Reform in the Late Middle Ages", *Renaissance Quarterly* 63 (2010): 36–37.

⁴⁹ "In quo (quamvis et alii complures de eis scriptitaverint) quantis quibusve efferendi sint laudibus, quamque omnium conconissime, Christianae passionis archetypum, sua cum genitrice Solomona praecinuerint, reperies quam facillime." Mertz, ed., *Flavii Iosepi viri Iudaei... liber*, A-ii-v.

⁵⁰ The first two couplets read, "Virgineo Mariae latitabat pectore quantus / Dum steterat Christi sub cruce moesta dolor. // En Solomoniaco (nisi quis meminisse recuset / Antiochi) fiet certior ipse typo; and the last, "Hac ratione typi Mariae Solomona per orbis / Dignius immensi climata nomen habet." *Ibid.*, A-ii-v and A-iii-v.

⁵¹ Jacobus Magdalius, "In vitam divae Solomones Hecatostichon," in *Flavii Iosepi viri Iudaei peri aitokratoros logismoi*, ed. Elias "Marcaeus" Mertz (Cologne: Eucharius Cervicornus, 1517), H-iv-v–H-vii-v.

any reader would understand as equally relevant to the Christian martyr: "if you want to shine to the sky, my sons, you cannot imagine what prize awaits you."⁵² Apocalyptic motifs are absent from this poem. Magdalius' references and allusions are classical and, in this regard, his exuberance is unrestrained. Solomona's loyalty is compared to that of Odysseus' faithful wife Penelope;⁵³ her motherhood is marked by the blessings of Lucina, Roman goddess of childhood.⁵⁴ Solomona's neglect in the world of Catholic devotion could only have been caused, he proposes, by such a murky force as the Lethe, the Greek river of forgetfulness,⁵⁵ but with "Stentorian" voice Magdalius promised to correct the oversight.⁵⁶

Evaluation of the compilation – the third and last of Mertz's publications related to the cult – has been somewhat distorted by several infelicities, most significantly, the assumption that Mertz was a humanist and the nearly exclusive attention paid to the edition of *De imperatrice ratione* over against the texts included with it. In point of fact, the edited volume deserves to be analyzed both in sequence with the two antecedent and non-humanist works and as a complex single volume in which the parts purposefully fit together. Seen in this light, the compilation's usefulness as a handbook for the study of the Maccabee martyrs and for preaching leaps into the foreground. It includes the scriptural sources for the Maccabee passion, canonical and apocryphal; collected excerpts from patristic, monastic, scholastic, and pastoral sources extending from Cyprian of Antioch (fourth century) to Antonino of Florence (1389–1458);⁵⁷ and finally the new Latin poem in honor, above all, of the Maccabee mother. Mertz's poems

⁵² "Si lustrare velis, fili mea viscera, coelum, / Quantula te maneant praemia, nosse potes." *Ibid.*, H-v-r.

⁵³ "Si tu Moeonium vatem sortita fuisses, Penelopes esset fama secunda tuae." *Ibid.*, H-iv-v.

⁵⁴ "Torva tuo valeat, rogito, Lucina precatu / Infaustum fulcet ne quis homullus itu." *Ibid.*, H-vii-v.

⁵⁵ "Ne tamen aeternum Lethes tegeare sub amne, / Hoc (licet exiguum) Carmen habeto meum." *Ibid.*, H-iv-v.

⁵⁶ "Sint licet ora mihi centum reboantia linguis, / Et vox Stentoreo non minor ulla sono." *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Antonino was canonized in 1523, along with Benno of Meissen; these were the last canonizations of the Middle Ages. See also *Die Patristik in der frühen Neuzeit: Die Relektüre der Kirchenväter in den Wissenschaften des 15. bis 18. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Günter Frank et al., vol. 10, Melanchthon-Schriften der Stadt Bretten (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2006), 84–100, 117, 225–226; and Thomas Leinkauf, "Beobachtungen zur Rezeption patristischer Autoren in der frühen Neuzeit," in *Die*

could be read aloud and as such served the preacher and entertained the devotee. His second poem, with its marginal notations, could help the more scholarly user find sources and principal homiletic interpretations of the Maccabee martyrs. Mertz then organized the third work, the compilation, for an even more sophisticated readership: he offered the scholars and preachers historical and contemporary texts to use, and to literate devotees, whose numbers were increasing in the sixteenth century, texts and images with which to be inspired.

Within this collection of sources, Erasmus' edition of *De imperatrice ratione* holds center stage. Like the Greek original of 4 Maccabees, the text is composed in sermonic form and exhorts the listeners to a form of religious stoicism that was common in the Judaism and Christianity of late antiquity. The text's argument relies on terms emblematic of late classical stoicism, to the effect that the passions (fears and appetites) must be subordinated to reason, whose supreme form is religious.⁵⁸ "Devout reason is sovereign over the emotions,"⁵⁹ 4 Maccabees states; and thus the good man, "the one fulfilling his service to God,"⁶⁰ does not truly suffer. Narrative illustration follows upon theoretical disquisition. The Jewish Scriptures provided relevant examples, foremost being the Maccabees.⁶¹ "The seven brothers and their mother who died for the sake of virtue and provide an example of noble bravery...and by despising sufferings that bring death, demonstrated that reason controls the emotions."⁶² "By following a philosophy in accordance with devout reason, [they] have prevailed over the most painful instruments of torture."⁶³

4 Maccabees, it should be noted, is no less gory than Mertz's earlier works, as for example the account of the third son's tortures and death indicates:

Enraged by the man's boldness, [the king's men] disjointed his hands and feet with their instruments, dismembering him by prying his limbs from their sockets, and breaking his fingers and arms and legs and elbows. Since they were not able in any way to break his spirit, they

Patristik in der frühen Neuzeit, ed. Günter Frank et al. (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2006), 191–195.

⁵⁸ Mertz, ed., *Flavii Iosephi viri Iudaei... liber*, B-i-v–B-iii-r. See also 4 Macc 1–3.

⁵⁹ 4 Macc 1:1.

⁶⁰ 4 Macc 12:14.

⁶¹ Mertz, ed., *Flavii Iosephi viri Iudaei... liber*, B-iii-r–E-i-v. See also 4 Macc 4.

⁶² 4 Macc 1:8–9.

⁶³ 4 Macc 8:1.

abandoned the instruments and scalped him with their fingernails in a Scythian fashion, then immediately brought him to the wheel; and while his vertebrae were being dislocated upon it, he saw his own flesh torn all around and drops of blood flowing from his entrails.⁶⁴

Mertz undoubtedly had 4 Maccabees at his disposal when he composed his second metrical passion; and while he refers to tortures in the “Scythian fashion” in neither of his poems, he does describe the dismemberment of limbs, breaking of bones, scalping, and application of the wheel in both.

But if the humanists did not, as we might expect, attenuate the brutality, then we must ask to what end they retained it. The beginnings of an answer can be found in examining why the first-century Stoics included the brutality at all, in order to then extrapolate an explanation for the Renaissance humanists’ inclusion. In short, the measure of violence sustained by the Maccabees correlates, in the stoical work, with the power of religious reason: the more violence the Maccabees could sustain without submitting, the greater the proof their example provided for the supremacy of religious reason. Stoicism was a central component of the Greek philosophical culture that first Hellenized Jews and then early and medieval Christians embraced and out of which 4 Maccabees emerged.⁶⁵ Stoicism was also highly attractive to many humanists.⁶⁶ When Erasmus introduces the text, it will be recalled, he points to “constancy” as the premier virtue exhibited by the Maccabees, using it to complement the piety and virginity of Cologne’s other two municipal patrons, the Three Kings and Saint Ursula. The word *constantia* does not, in fact, appear in the 1517 Latin edition of *De imperatrice ratione liber*. But it is a catchword of stoicism. The first-century Roman Stoic philosopher Seneca – a favorite of humanists – even wrote a treatise on it.⁶⁷ Erasmus’ use of the word marks a shift in how the Maccabees might be appreciated as saints attractive to a humanist readership: their passion, in Erasmus’ humanist hands, exemplifies a *virtue* that reading about and reflecting upon should inspire devotees to make their own.

⁶⁴ 4 Macc 10:5–8.

⁶⁵ deSilva, *4 Maccabees*, 51–75.

⁶⁶ See Alexandre Tarrette, ed., *Stoïcisme et Christianisme à la Renaissance* (Paris: Editions Rue d’Ulm, 2006).

⁶⁷ L. Annaeus Seneca, *Dialogorum Liber II: Ad Serenum: Nec iniuriam nec contumeliam accipere sapientem (De constantia sapientis)*, ed. Wichem Klei (Zwolle: N.V. Uitgevers-Maatschappij, W.E.J. Tjeenk Willink, 1950).

The fourth and final codex produced under Mertz's direction was a manuscript appearing around 1525 and likely in production since 1521. Similar to the edited volume of 1517, the manuscript is a collection of shorter works. It includes all the documents appearing in the 1517 printed collection plus several letters and patristic excerpts, a history of the convent, and a new passion.⁶⁸ The manuscript was produced to be prominently displayed in the Maccabee church on ceremonial occasions such as the feast day of the martyrs and their translation.⁶⁹ The woodcuts that graced the early works are replaced in the manuscript with three full-page, colored miniatures of the martyrs: Antiochus' interrogation of the brothers and their mother (see figure 6),⁷⁰ the mother standing over her sons covering them with her cape,⁷¹ and the dismembered brothers and their mother in a boiling cauldron.⁷²

The first original textual component in the manuscript is a letter to Mertz from Johannes Groningen, the abbot of Werden, dated December 16, 1521, in which the author encourages Mertz to undertake the manuscript project.⁷³ The letter recalls Werden's involvement in the reforms implemented in the Maccabee cloister since Mertz's own arrival there in 1492. Its prominent placement at the manuscript's beginning, along with a rendering of the abbey's coat-of-arms, suggests the abbot's sponsorship of the project.⁷⁴ His participation and the letter's exuberant style reaffirm what we saw in the 1517 edited volume, namely, that humanists were interested in the cult and a humanist style was being brought to such devotional compositions. This is also suggested by the participation of the Werden librarian Johannes

⁶⁸ Cologne, DDB, ms 271. Also Paris, BN, ms. lat. 10161. I worked from digital copies of both manuscripts. The Cologne manuscript, the original, with descriptions can be found on Codices Electronici Ecclesiae Coloniensis (CEEC) at <http://www.ceec.uni-koeln.de/>. The latest published description is to be found in *Glauben und Wissen*, eds. Plotzek et al. The Paris manuscript is a simple transcription.

⁶⁹ Rautenberg evaluates the manuscript's production, especially in relation to the antecedent publications: Rautenberg, "Medienkonkurrenz," 180–186.

⁷⁰ Cologne, DDB, ms 271, fol. 3v.

⁷¹ Cologne, DDB, ms 271, fol. 7v.

⁷² Cologne, DDB, ms 271, fol. 39r.

⁷³ The letter, heretofore never published or edited, appears in full at the end of the chapter as an appendix.

⁷⁴ Rautenberg, "Medienkonkurrenz," 179.



Figure 6. "The Maccabees before King Antiochus IV," from the *Makkabäer-Handschrift des Helias Mertz*, Cologne, DDB ms 271, 3^v. The image is reproduced with the permission of the Diözesan- und Dombibliothek, Cologne.

Cincinnati, who will be discussed shortly. A brief essay by Erasmus dedicated to the nuns and entitled “*Libellus de comparatione virginis et martyris*”⁷⁵ further suggests an intimate connection between manuscript and convent, as does a new excerpt added to the others in the manuscript, a passage taken from *De honorandis parentibus*, likely by Saint Jerome.⁷⁶

There are two lengthier additions to the manuscript. One is a history of the monastery and relics by Ortwinus Gratius,⁷⁷ rector of the Bursa Cucana and an editor – famous and fearsome – at the Quentel printing house. Gratius was a leading figure in Cologne’s learned circles at the beginning of the sixteenth century and an advocate of both humanist studies and a corresponding modification of the university curriculum.⁷⁸ In his preface, dated 1524,⁷⁹ Gratius indicated that he has based his account on the documents discovered at the opening of the high altar of the Maccabee church in 1504.⁸⁰ The history situates the monastery and its prized relics in the general sacred history of Cologne. Gratius’ traced careful links between the Maccabee monastery and, first, the much celebrated Saint Ursula and companions, whose martyrdom and burial in the vicinity of the Maccabee monastery Gratius related with gusto,⁸¹ and second, the translation to Cologne of the relics of the Three Kings by Archbishop Rainald of Dassel

⁷⁵ Cologne, DDB, ms 271, fol. 74r–75v.

⁷⁶ Cologne, DDB, ms 271, fol. 56r–56v.

⁷⁷ Ortwinus Gratius Daventriensis, “*De insigni ornatu ac nobilitate, et praesertim de huius loci antiquitate, ad divos Macabaeos martyres in Colonia*,” Cologne, DDB, ms 271, fol. 122r–144v.

⁷⁸ Jean-François Gilmont, “Gratius (Ortwin), humanist et théologien allemand (vers 1480–1542),” *DHGE* 21 (1986): 21(1986): 1249; James V. Mehl, “Humanism in the Home Town of the ‘Obscure Men’,” in *Humanismus in Köln*, ed. idem (Cologne: Böhlau, 1991), 3, 5, 7, 13, 17, 27, 30–31, 35, 37; Erich Meuthen, *Kölner Universitätsgeschichte: Die alte Universität* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1988), 218–226, 229, 233; Götz-Rüdiger Tewes, *Die Bursen der Kölner Artisten-Fakultät: bis zur Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 13, *Studien zur Geschichte der Universität zu Köln* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1993), 101–102, 632–633, 748–768.

⁷⁹ “*Valete feliciter, praecolende virgines, et quae ad undecim milium virginum, sanctorumque Macabaeorum, et loci istius, ac sacratissimae Aedis nostrae celebrationem, perstrinximus, boni consulite et Ortuinum v-ri deditissimum, nonsolum diligite, sed mutuiter amate. Coloniae ex aedibus meis anno salutis nostrae, MCCCCXXIII.*” Cologne, DDB, ms 271, fol. 144v.

⁸⁰ “*Quo facto, ecce omnia, quae ante a nobis narrata sunt, luce clarius a praecessoribus ac maioribus nostris in eo literis et monumentis commendata, munita, atque recondita conspiciuntur.*” Cologne, DDB, ms 271, fol. 142r.

⁸¹ Cologne, DDB, ms 271, fol. 136r–137r.

(r. 1159–1167) in 1164.⁸² The association of the Maccabee relics with Rainald – clearly erroneous – served Gratius’ (and Mertz’s) greater purpose: enhancement of the relics’ significance by linking them to Cologne’s most famous relics and cult.

Gratius’ text had three principal functions: to memorialize the Maccabee monastery, to catalog the sacred art and accouterments related to the cult, and to commend Mertz as the worthy caretaker of both convent and cult. The expression of all three purposes had medieval roots and corresponding literary genres. A humanist dimension infiltrates what we read as well. Even though written as a typical medieval narrative catalog of sacred objects, the history is decorated, like Magdalius’ poem, with classical references in a typically humanist way: in praise of Mertz, Gratius invoked, for example, the ancient figures Flacius,⁸³ Pindar,⁸⁴ and Demosthenes,⁸⁵ as well as more recent heroes for early German humanists such as Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch.⁸⁶

The other, new composition is a passion by Johannes Cincinnius, “The Amazing Agonies of the Seven Holy Hebrew Brothers, the Maccabee Martyrs, and their Mother Solomona.”⁸⁷ The originality of the work has been much obscured by its frequent description as a translation of Mertz’s vernacular poems. Cincinnius himself described his undertaking that way, with tropic humility.⁸⁸ Gratius’ characterization of Cincinnius’ accomplishment in a letter to Mertz in March 1520 is no less an understatement: Cincinnius, we read, has not only translated from an “alemannic vernacular” into the Latin language, but endowed it with the “proper form of a passion.”⁸⁹ Of course the stories Cincinnius and Mertz relate are similar. They could not be otherwise. The Latin prose work deserves, nonetheless, to be regarded as distinct.⁹⁰

⁸² Cologne, DDB, ms 271, fol. 139v–140r.

⁸³ Cologne, DDB, ms 271, fol. 126v.

⁸⁴ Cologne, DDB, ms 271, fol. 126v.

⁸⁵ Cologne, DDB, ms 271, fol. 131v.

⁸⁶ Cologne, DDB, ms 271, fol. 126v.

⁸⁷ Cologne, DDB, ms 271, fol. 79r–121v.

⁸⁸ Cologne, DDB, ms 271, fol. 119r–121v.

⁸⁹ “*Quod inquam opus, ita alemanico idiomate conscriptum, proinde Ioannes Cincinnius Lippiensis, integerrimus Christi sacerdos, et Reverendi patris ac domini insignis Coenobii Guerthinensis Abbatis, a sacris, vir secularis, sequutus, in latinam non solum refudit linguam, verumetiam ad iustam quandam historiae passionis formam redegit, petitionibus in hoc vestris obsequens. Atque ita concinnavit, ut a viris aliquot eruditissimum plurimum commendari meruerit.*” Cologne, DDB, ms 271, fol. 127r.

⁹⁰ Cologne, DDB, ms 271, fol. 113v–114v. The identical text appears in the copy: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. lat. 10161, fol. 85r–86r.

The Werden librarian took, for example, greater care in illustrating the theological justification for the argument of prefiguration: if Christ and Mary were the anti-type of Adam and Eve, a Pauline image, then the Maccabees, brothers and mother, reflect, dimly and antecedently, the sacrificial giving of the Christ. It is a death different in degree, but of the same kind. Other themes, such as the salvation-historical and apocalyptic, are replaced by an extended allegorical explication of the connections between the Maccabee martyrdom and both Christ's passion and death and the salvific instruments left at the church's disposal.⁹¹

4

The manuscript of 1525 and the reliquary of 1527 were the last two objects produced in honor of the Maccabee martyrs in the context of the early sixteenth-century invigoration of the cult; and so we may turn now to the overarching questions: on whose account, how, and why did the Maccabee cult experience such a reinvigoration in Cologne at this time? Regarding the cult's principal instigators, the foregoing discussion suggests several principal players or groups of players. To begin, there was Elias Mertz, taken as an individual. We could not speak of a "renaissance of the Maccabees" were it not for him. He is the historical figure who links the church renovations, the artistic commissions, and the literary compositions. In the decades before Mertz arrived at the monastery in 1491 and following his death in 1528, there was no similar creativity or energy surrounding the cult. Between those years there was no activity that does not bear his fingerprints. For reasons sketched above, I have not identified Mertz as a humanist. His dedication to the cult demonstrates a mainstream late medieval devotional interest in it and serves to remind us that individuals have been able to inspire the popularity of particular cults at given times.⁹² Next, there were the Renaissance humanists, the clear

⁹¹ "Ad eum id ferme modum, quo idem vester Helias dudum, v-ris consulendo civibus, alemanico quidem idiomate perpulchre effecerat. Ut quod etiam vos offenderat, postremo addam, quomodo non unus aut alius ex tantis Scriptoribus rem, quantum ad martyrium attinet, plene ac praecipue agat." Cologne, DDB, ms 271, fol. 81r.

⁹² Götz-Rüdiger Tewes, "Frühhumanismus in Köln: Neue Beobachtungen zu dem thomistischen Theologen Johannes Tinctoris von Tournai," in *Studien zum 15. Jahrhundert*, ed. Johannes Helmrath et al. (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1994), 667–696.

participation of Erasmus, Cincinnius, Gratius, and Magdalius demonstrating how humanists took to the cult of the saints and became sought out as contributors to it even by devotees and patrons who were not themselves humanists.

Another shaping force can be designated as church reforming. By reformers I have in mind participants in diverse late medieval movements sharing the conviction that Christian society was corrupted and that radical steps needed to be taken to make it what it was meant to be. Such forces converged on Cologne's Maccabee cult; a typical late medieval reforming archbishop thus pressured the Maccabee convent to join a leading Benedictine reform movement and assigned Mertz to tend to the nuns' spiritual and temporal needs. And one particular reform movement, the Bursfeld Congregation, assigned the abbot of the Werden to supervise the long term implementation of reform in that convent. Both Cincinnius and the abbot Johannes Groningen came from Werden, Groningen encouraging Mertz in his care for the Maccabee convent and invigoration of the cult. Magdalius was a member of the reforming branch of the Dominican order (the Observants); and there was of course Erasmus, the preeminent humanist advocate of church reform. The significance of these identifications is not to turn the Maccabees into patrons and models of a particular kind of reforming ideology antecedent and concurrent to Martin Luther, but rather to show how diverse elite, learned, and reforming movements came into conversation with the common, less learned religious devotion at a time when European society is thought to have been at its most stratified, especially in its religious dimensions.

A corresponding set of questions has to do with how and why these groups intersected at the Maccabee cult in Cologne, how they shaped the cult, and where characteristics of the renewed Maccabee cult were tied to issues related to late medieval religion in general and more specifically to questions of dying and killing for the faith. In this regard, I would like to raise five points. The first is to note that the cultic veneration was limited to the Maccabee martyrs of 2 Maccabees 7. The Maccabee warriors led by Mattathias and Judas, referred to in the First Book of Maccabees and elsewhere in the Second Book, do not appear in the artistic or literary works produced between 1490 and 1530. Proponents of the cult considered only "dying for the faith" – it was only the martyred family whose relics were at their disposal – and did not address "killing for the faith."

Second, the cult's proponents did have to acknowledge, at least perfunctorily, that the Maccabees died for the *law* rather than the *faith*. In their theological analysis of this problem, the authors discussed here were not original. Mertz took his argument of prefiguration and typology from a conventional, medieval application of the allegorical sense of Holy Writ. Moreover, the collection of excerpts from ancient and medieval authors was not a systematic review of the older scholarly literature. Its function was to shape an appreciation of the Maccabees and their martyrdom. The excerpts from Rabanus, Bernard, Hugo of St.-Cher, and others, although more or less accurate given the state of the manuscript tradition, are selective. They take only the martyrdom as a theme, and omit the Maccabee warriors even when the cited authors include them. While there is thus evidence of an editor's heavy hand, there are also practical explanations for the omission. The most self-evident is that there was no Christian veneration of Mattathias, Judas Maccabeus, or their warriors as saints in the Middle Ages.

Third, that the Maccabee martyrs died as Jews for the Mosaic law was obviously not an insurmountable hindrance to their use as religious exemplars by fifteenth and sixteenth-century Latin Christians. Moreover, none of the authors studied here explicitly addresses matters of contemporary Jewry or Judaism in their writings, either to generalize from the heroic Maccabees to pass a more favorable judgment on contemporary Jews, or to vilify them on account of any contrast to their heroic forebears. To be sure, the authors' outlook on the Maccabees and their interpretive techniques were based on an understanding of Scripture that mainly valued the Old Testament insofar as its theological contents were, it was believed, brought to perfection in the New Testament and the life of the Church. In any event, the new texts may have reinforced background issues, but they did not advance a sixteenth-century anti-Jewish discourse.⁹³

To be sure, this raises another issue since Cologne – at least “learned Cologne” – did have a “Jewish problem” in the early sixteenth century. As I have indicated, midway between publication of the 1507 and 1517 books, the Empire's intellectual world was turned upside down by the so-called Reuchlin-Pfefferkorn controversy: a complex affair largely involving a dispute over the benefit to Christians of learning Hebrew, the preservation of Jewish books, the conversion of the Jews, their

⁹³ Cf. Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, “The Maccabean Martyrs”, 165–167, 188–199.

status in canon law, and their legal rights in the Empire. Cologne became a staging point for the controversy. The inquisitor Jacob Hoogstraeten, who was charged with evaluating Pfefferkorn's proposal to confiscate and destroy the Talmud and who subsequently became one of Reuchlin's most unrelenting critics, was at the same time superior of the Dominican priory in Cologne. Moreover, Cologne's theology faculty was petitioned for an evaluation of the theological arguments and to adjudicate an accusation of slander and Judaizing against Reuchlin. Its sympathetic treatment of these charges earned it the contempt of Reuchlin's supporters. Consequently, many of the targeted personalities satirized in the *Epistolae obscurorum virorum* (1515–1517) were Cologne theologians unsympathetic to Reuchlin.

Many humanists took Reuchlin's side in the controversy, but not all. The historical scholarship reads Hutten's accusations more cautiously today than in the past and warns now against a simplistic characterization of humanists being for Reuchlin and scholastics against him.⁹⁴ Indeed three humanists who wrote for the Maccabee cult are targets of the *Epistola's* satire: The letters' addressee is Ortwinus Gratius; the *Epistola* includes a sarcastic greeting to Magdalius;⁹⁵ and authorship of another letter was imputed to Cincinnius.⁹⁶ It seems hard to imagine that a group of humanists accused of being on the pro-Pfefferkorn, anti-Reuchlin, anti-humanist side of the controversy would not have wanted – on the heels of the controversial judgments of the Cologne theologians and concurrent to the publication of the *Epistola obscurorum virorum* – to use their writing on the Maccabees to address these matters of great moment regarding Judaism and Jewish culture, or to

⁹⁴ See Mehl, "Humanism," 16; James H. Overfield, *Humanism and Scholasticism in Late Medieval Germany* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 296; Erika Rummel, *The Case against Johann Reuchlin: Religious and Social Controversy in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); Erika Rummel, *The Humanist-Scholastic Debate in the Renaissance and Reformation*, vol. 120, Harvard Historical Studies (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995).

⁹⁵ Ulrich von Hutten, *Epistolae obscurorum virorum*, 2 vols., ed. Edward Böcking (Leipzig: Teubner, 1864–1869), 1:18 (lines 39–40). As it happens, the *Epistola's* principal author, Ulrich von Hutten, had genuinely praised Magdalius in an earlier elegy, *ad poetas Germanos*. Ulrich von Hutten, *Opera omnia*, ed. Edward Böcking (Leipzig: Teubner, 1859–1870), 1: 74 (lines 180–184).

⁹⁶ Ulrich von Hutten, *Epistolae obscurorum virorum*, 2: 36. For an explanation of the association between Cincinnius and a letter signed "Stephanus Calvastrius," see Freitäger, *Johannes Cincinnius*, 125–128.

defend themselves.⁹⁷ But they did neither explicitly, and we are left to hypothesize that the collection of ancient and medieval excerpts and the developed typological comparison between Christ and the Maccabees and between the Virgin Mary and Solomona were an attempt by a group of humanists accused of being anti-Reuchlinists to show how they could use the Old Testament and find genuine spiritual fruit in it. On the other hand, it is not beyond credibility to conclude from the absence of direct evidence suggesting otherwise that the veneration of Old Testament martyrs in early sixteenth-century Cologne had nothing to do with debates over contemporary Jews and Judaism, the Jewish community itself having been expelled from Cologne in 1424.⁹⁸ Given Mertz's effectiveness in establishing, already by 1514, the Maccabees as city patrons along with the Three Kings and Saint Ursula, the humanists' contributions may merely be a further indication of Mertz's success and humanist ambitions.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Marianne Awerbach, "Über Juden und Judentum zwischen Humanismus und Reformation: Zum Verständnis der Motivation von Reuchlins Kampf für das jüdische Schrifttum," in *Reuchlin und die Juden*, ed. Arno Herzig et al. (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1993), 199; José V. de Pina Martins, *Erasmus à l'origine de l'humanisme en Allemagne: la glorification de Reuchlin*, vol. 351, Vorträge der Rheinisch-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Geisteswissenschaften (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1997), 11–14; Arno Herzig, "Die Juden in Deutschland zur Zeit Reuchlins," in *Reuchlin und die Juden*, ed. Arno Herzig et al. vol. 3, Pfortzheimer Reuchlinschriften (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1993), 11–15; Shimon Markish, *Erasmus and the Jews*, trans. Anthony Olcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 27–28; Wilhelm Maurer, "Reuchlin und das Judentum," in *Johannes Reuchlin (1455–1522)*, ed. Hermann Kling and Stefan Rhein (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1994), 275; Hans Peterse, *Jacobus Hoogstraeten gegen Johannes Reuchlin: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Antijudaismus im 16. Jahrhundert*, vol. 165, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für europäische Geschichte (Mainz: von Zabern, 1995), 145–150; and Winfrid Trusen, "Die Prozesse gegen Reuchlins 'Augenspiegel': Zum Streit um die Judenbücher," in *Reuchlin und die politischen Kräfte seiner Zeit*, ed. Stefan Rhein (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1998), 87–90.

⁹⁸ Shulamit S. Magnus, *Jewish Emancipation in a German City: Cologne, 1798–1871*, Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 12–19; and Matthias Schmandt, "Cologne, Jewish Centre on the Lower Rhine," in *The Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages*, ed. Christoph Cluse (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 367–377.

⁹⁹ Conflicting evaluation of the anti-Jewish dimension of the Reuchlin-Pfefferkorn controversy marks the recent scholarship. Arguing against prevailing opinion that focuses on the obvious anti-Judaism of Pfefferkorn's supporters, Erich Meuthen identifies an anti-Jewish thrust in the "Letters of Obscure Men," whose authors assail their opponents for protecting the Jewish convert to Christianity. See Heiko A. Oberman, "Gansfort, Reuchlin and the 'Obscure Men': First Fissures in the Foundations of Faith," in *Studien zum 15. Jahrhundert*, ed. Johannes Helmuth et al. (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1994), 2: 717–735. See also Johannes Helmuth, "'Humanismus und Scholastik' und

Fourth, although finding a way for the Maccabees to die for the faith may not have stimulated much originality on the part of the Renaissance authors, instrumentalizing their suffering and dying occupied them to no end. Mertz and the humanists, however, did this with characteristic differences. As to Mertz, the aspect of his poetry that was once dismissed as “slaughterhouse poetry” offers the clearest indication of how he was trying to popularize the Maccabees: the gore in the texts (which Mertz by no means invented) corresponds to an aesthetic of representing Christ’s passion nowhere more prevalent than in late medieval Germany. The carnage of Mertz’s work – in word and image – made the ancient martyrdom all the more like Christ’s passion by late medieval standards, enriched the typological argument, and brought devotees more intimately into a world in which suffering was redemptive.

Although Magdalius’ and Cincinnius’ descriptions of the tortures were briefer and the bloody artwork of 1517 was not included in the 1525 manuscript, the violence in the more humanistic works still served a critical point. Here, as argued, the stoical context gives meaning to the violence, insofar as the measure of violence sustained by the martyrs correlates to the power of reason. For Erasmus and the other humanists, the suffering and death of the Maccabees exemplified a virtue that, it was hoped, the devotee could aspire to and imitate through reading and reflection.

Fifth and finally, I wish to return to a topic I raised at the beginning, namely, the significance of contingency. The renaissance of the Maccabee cult in Cologne, the production of several works of fine art, the composition of three new metrical passions and a new prose one, the publication of three books and the preparation of a luxury manuscript, the investment of human and financial resources in their production, the theological and literary reflection analyzed here, and resulting events and controversies could not have occurred were it not for several contingencies. These were: a set of presumed relics in a monastery; a monastery in need of renovation and reform; a bishop, a reforming congregation, and wealthy Rhenish donors, along with

die deutschen Universitäten um 1500,” *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 15 (1988): 187–203; Meuthen, *Kölner Universitätsgeschichte*, 176–178; Charles Garfield Nauert, Jr., “Humanist Infiltration into the Academic World: Some Studies of Northern Universities,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 43 (1990): 799–812; and Overfield, *Humanism and Scholasticism in Late Medieval Germany*.

their resources; and Elias Mertz – a resourceful, creative, indefatigable, perhaps also ambitious and self-aggrandizing cleric – who had a keen eye for the complementary attractiveness of the traditional (cult of the saints) and the innovative (the humanist style). Had any of those elements been missing, there would have likely been no vigorous Maccabee cult to analyze. Given their convergence, we have in Cologne a striking example of how Old Testament figures might “die for the faith” in Christian argot and how this could be made broadly attractive in the complex devotional contexts that medieval and early modern Europe encompassed.

ON THE PATH OF THE MACCABEES?
THE RHETORIC OF 'HOLY WAR' IN THE SERMONS
AND PAMPHLETS OF 'PURITANS' IN THE RUN-UP TO
THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR (1620–1642)

Andreas Pečar

1

In 1629, the English theologian Richard Bernard published a book with the remarkable title *The Bible-Battells, or the Sacred Art Military for the Rightly Wageing of Warre according to Holy Writ*.¹ In this tractate, Bernard consistently used the Bible as an exemplary text for the just waging of war. He emphasized, on the one hand, which wars were pleasing to God and thus necessary, and, on the other hand, the manner in which war was meant to be waged. The ancient nation of Israel here served as a model worthy of imitation.²

Bernard's decision to confront his readers with the model of ancient Israel was not without reason. In 1629 England was still at war with France and Spain; but following a worsening of the military situation and conflicts with Parliament in 1628, Charles I had decided to do everything he could to arrange a peace. His hopes were realized with France in 1629 and with Spain in 1630.³ With his text, Bernard was

¹ Richard Bernard, *The Bible-Battells, Or the Sacred Art Military for the Rightly Wageing of Warre according to Holy Writ* (London: 1629). The bellicose nature of this text becomes all the more clear when it is compared to John Downname, *The Christian Warfare* (London: 1604). Downname understands Christian warfare in an entirely spiritual sense as a struggle of every Christian with the attacks of Satan. Another purely spiritual concept of war is presented in William Gouge, *The Whole Armour of God, or the spirituall Furniture, which God hath provided every Christian Soldier* (London: 1616). The difference between these two viewpoints represents a difference between two types of clergy within the English Church, the "political" and "moral" Puritan; see Michael McGiffert, "God's Controversy with Jacobean England," *American Historical Review* 88 (1983): 1151–1174, esp. 1159.

² See Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1965), 277–285.

³ Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 65–75. In his dedication to Charles, Bernard explicitly enjoins the king, to the contrary, to stand "in the forefront of the Lord's battles."

delegitimizing these peace policies without explicitly mentioning them. War against idolaters, his message went, was a duty for God; rejecting it an act of disobedience toward Him.⁴ And England's salvation could only be achieved on God's side. Within this argumentation, war and peace were not negotiable quantities, to be opted for according to considerations of political opportunity. Rather, the course of things was fixed by God's law.

At first glance it is astonishing that the Maccabees and their successful campaigns hardly have a place in Bernard's *Bible Battells*. At the tractate's start, Judas Maccabeus is mentioned once as a military hero at the end of an enumeration of other heroic biblical figures: Joshua, Shamgar, Samson, and David.⁵ Bernard does not devote any more attention to either Judas or his family despite his declared goal of writing a "History of Holy Warres" that takes Israel as its standard. When Bernard needed to demonstrate the necessity of certain wars being waged against idolatry, he cited the Deuteronomic texts (Num 25:1, 17–18; 31:1–3) together with Joshua (22:12, 33) and Judges (20). This was the case as well with a number of other publications stemming from the Protestant side in the 1620s and then again in the 1640s that propagated holy war, in other words, a campaign in defense of the true faith against the phalanx of idolaters. Despite the Old Testament's nearly undisputed role as an exemplary political work in the period's political discourse and its omnipresence in the ongoing political controversies, the deeds of the Maccabees do not figure prominently in any of these texts.⁶

This fact calls for an explanation, particularly in light of the presence in Bernard's *Bible-Battells*, as well as in many sermons and texts dealing more directly with the period's political situation, of a range of elements also comprising the political theology of the Maccabean

⁴ Bernard, *The Bible-Battells* Preface ¶7r: "Our course is just, though God please a while to afflict us, Set be worth of our Religion before your eyes: Its the truth of the eternal God. The Scriptures command it; and thereby our consciences bound, doe tie us unto it."

⁵ Bernard, *The Bible-Battells*, 2–3.

⁶ See John R. Hale, "Incitement to Violence? English Divines on the Theme of War 1578–1631," in *idem*, *Renaissance War Studies* (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), chap. 18; Timothy George, "War and Peace in the Puritan Tradition," *Church History* 53 (1984): 492–503; in addition Peter Lake, "The Moderate and Irenic Case for Religious War: Joseph Hall's *Via Media* in Context," *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in England: Essays presented to David Underdown*, ed. Susan D. Amussen and Mark A. Kishlansky (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 55–84.

books. The idea of holy war is here especially noteworthy.⁷ A further basic idea in the agitation at work here is that of a conditioned alliance of God with men, an alliance in which the promise of salvation was tied to the condition of complete obedience to God and in which this obedience was measured most of all against one's own efforts to combat any form of idolatry.⁸ Finally, we need to take account of a theoretical political understanding that had two effects at once. On the one hand, *lex Dei* was considered an incontrovertibly binding norm in all political decisions. On the other hand, in the case of military conflict, victory and defeat lay not in human hands but in God's hands alone.⁹ Obedience to God and orthodox belief were thus decisive in determining who would leave the battlefield victorious. In the case of victory providence was on one's side whereas in the case of defeat, one was correspondingly punished for one's sinfulness.¹⁰

All these elements were present in the English debate, but no one tied them to the Maccabees. One salient explanation for this omission surfaces with a look at the way in which the Bible was generally used in the period's political discourse as an authority and storehouse of tradition, which is to say, at the biblicism practiced in England's political

⁷ See Egon Flaig, "‘Heiliger Krieg.’ Auf der Suche nach einer Typologie," *Historische Zeitschrift* 285 (2007): 265–302; and the standard work of Gerhard von Rad, *Der heilige Krieg im Alten Israel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, ³1958); from a comparative perspective, James Turner Johnson, *The Holy War Idea in Western and Islamic Traditions* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997). See also the essay by Kai Trampedach in this volume.

⁸ Klaus Baltzer, *Das Bundesformular* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, ²1964); Diego Arenhoevel, *Die Theokratie nach dem 1. und 2. Makkabäerbuch* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1967); Marc Z. Brettler, *God is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989); J. Wayne Baker, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant: The Other Reformed Tradition* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1980); David A. Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology in Sixteenth Century Reformation Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); Edward Vallance, *Revolutionary England and the National Covenant: State Oaths, Protestantism and the Political Nation 1553–1682* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), 6–48.

⁹ This conviction is paradigmatically presented in the speech of Judas Maccabeus to his fellow warriors (1 Macc 3:18–19): "It is an easy thing for many to be shut up in the hands of a few, and there is no difference in the sight of Heaven to save by many or by few; for victory in battle standeth not in the multitude of an host, but strength is from Heaven."

¹⁰ See Reinhard Müller, *Königtum und Gottesherrschaft: Untersuchungen zur alttestamentlichen Monarchiekritik*, vol. 3: *Forschungen zum Alten Testament*, 2nd series (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004); *Theokratie*, ed. Jacob Taubes, vol. 3, *Religionstheorie und politische Theologie* (Munich/Paderborn: Fink, 1987).

space. The recourse to biblical maxims and exempla in political discourse had three basic functions:¹¹

Biblical exempla frequently had an illustrative character. True to the antique rhetorical tradition, they served to illustrate general circumstances, norms, and rules. This included the presentation of models meant either to be emulated or to be viewed negatively as representations of disgraceful behavior.¹²

These exempla sometimes took on an additional function: rather than the exemplum simply being cited as an illustration of a rule, the rule could reveal itself from within the exemplum.¹³ In the case of Biblical exempla, particularly those from the Old Testament, this consistently involved God's law, which was revealed through them. Such law was understood as enduringly valid; Christ's covenant of grace was understood not as superseding it but as strengthening it anew. At the same time, the validity of *lex Dei* was now reduced to the realm of so-called moral law, while the Old Testament's ceremonial laws and regulations regarding civil and penal law were indeed seen as superseded.¹⁴ But the dividing line between these realms was never clear cut, a fact which, in the context of ongoing political conflict, led to the possibility of *jus divinum* being interpreted in a highly comprehensive way.

Lastly, some exempla were related to the future, thus introducing eschatological expectations into contemporary debates.¹⁵ The inscription of the worldly political confrontation between England and Spain into John's revelation of the final judgment rendered that confrontation into one between Christ and the Antichrist.¹⁶ For England, in this

¹¹ See Stefan Willer, Jens Ruchatz and Nicolas Pethes, "Zur Systematik des Beispiels," in *Das Beispiel: Epistemologie des Exemplarischen*, ed. *idem*, vol. 4, Literatur Forschung (Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos, 2007), 7–59.

¹² *Ibid.*, 10–20.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 31–40.

¹⁴ Edward Cardwell, *Synodalia: A Collection of Articles of Religion, Canons, and Proceedings of Convocations in the Province of Canterbury from the Year 1547 to the Year 1717* (Oxford: University Press, 1842), 1: 98, art. 7: "Although the lawe geven from God by Moyses, as touchyng ceremonies and rites, do not bynde Christian men, nor the civile preceptes therof, ought of necessitie to be receaved in any common wealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian man whatsoever, is free from the obedience of the commaundementes, whiche are called morall."

¹⁵ See the chapter by Pavlina Rychterova in this volume.

¹⁶ See generally Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millenium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 220–221; for the situation in England, Paul Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War* (Toronto/Buffalo/London: University of Toronto Press, 1978); Peter

eschatological framework, political calculation with various options for acting was replaced with the simple choice between standing in the final battle on Christ's side or on that of the Antichrist.¹⁷

The epistemological status and, narrowly tied to this, the degree of authority of the different maxims and exempla varied greatly according to the function they fulfilled in the political discourse. The binding character of statements in Holy Scripture was far less present when such statements were simply integrated into political argumentation as illustrative examples. On the other hand, to the extent the biblical argument evoked *lex Dei* or future salvation, the accompanying political statement was directly nourished by divine authority, with contradiction or neglect being akin to sacrilege, at least in the eyes of the author.

In this respect, the Maccabean books lacked the authority necessary to attest to God's law. For Protestants, they were considered part of the apocryphal corpus (on the contrast this formed to Catholicism, see below). They were accorded a certain didactic value, so that they had been retained in most English editions of the Bible. However, as such, they were not viewed as canonical. Already Miles Coverdale, who edited the first complete translation of the Bible – including the Apocrypha into English in 1535, had explained that “these books (good reader) which are called Apocrypha, are not judged among the doctors to be of like reputation with the other scripture, as you may perceive by St. Jerome in ‘Epistola ad Paulinum.’ And the chief cause is this: there be many places in them, that seem to be repugnant unto the open and manifest truth in other books of the Bible.”¹⁸ Correspondingly,

Lake, “The Significance of the Elizabethan Identification of the Pope as Antichrist,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 31 (1980): 161–178; Ronald G. Asch, “The Revelation of the Revelation: Die Bedeutung der Offenbarung des Johannes für das politische Denken in England im späten 16. und frühen 17. Jahrhundert,” in *Die Bibel als politisches Argument: Voraussetzungen und Folgen biblizistischer Herrschaftslegitimation in der Vormoderne*, ed. Andreas Pečar and Kai Trampedach (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2007), 315–332.

¹⁷ Bernard, *The Bible-Battells*, 54–55: “if the Enemie begin, let us stand for our Religion and lives with courage, Christ will take our parts and give us a glorious victorie in the end. The Lord hath spoken it; if we believe his Prophets, we shall prosper; and hee that beleeveth maketh not hast, if wee take a right course, let us stand still, not feare, fight valiantly the Lords battle, for and in the cause of Religion, seeking to avenge the Lord on those Romish Midianites, and behold then the salvation of the Lord, which hee will shew unto us in his appointed good time, even so, Amen.”

¹⁸ See David Daniell, *The Bible in English: Its History and Influence* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 187.

the 39 articles stipulating the dogmatic guidelines of the English Church, issued in 1563, denied any dogmatic authority to the apocryphal text, stating that "the Church...doth...not applie them to establishe any doctrine".¹⁹ And the so-called Geneva Bible, which would be especially popular until the mid-seventeenth century, underscored the texts' inferior status in various ways.²⁰ For instance, all helpful interpretive glossing of the sort offered for the other books of the Old and New Testaments prefaces, explanatory footnotes, and so forth was done away with. At the same time many notes pointed to the passages whose statements contained contradictions with Holy Scripture.²¹

At least in Protestant England, such reservations robbed the Maccabean books of, as it were, the attestative force needed if the exempla they contained were to be presented as expressions of eternal truth. Rather than functioning as an attestation of divine law, the books could thus be appreciated for their exempla; they could be recommended for imitation as long as their contents were not in open contradiction with Christian doctrine, as was, for instance, the story of Razis' suicide. Consequently, as an example of military intervention for true faith, Judas Maccabeus could be incorporated into Bernard's *Bible-Battells*.²²

If the Maccabees thus played no large role in the citatory canon of the English Protestants because of the doubted canonicity of the relevant texts, a comparison with Catholic political discourse would seem to be promising. Against the views of Jerome, the Council of Trent had confirmed the canonicity of the so-called Apocrypha.²³

¹⁹ Cardwell, *Synodalia*, 1: 92, art. 6.

²⁰ Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 294–295; Dan G. Danner, "The Contribution of the Geneva Bible of 1560 to the English Protestant Tradition," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 12 (1981): 5–19; Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (London: Lane, 1993), 56–63.

²¹ Thus the notes to 2 Macc 12:44 (praying for the dead) and 2 Macc 14:41 (Razis' suicide). See Cameron A. MacKenzie, *The Battle for the Bible in England 1557–1582* (New York: Lang, 2002), 41–42.

²² In a comparable way, in the Thirty Years' War the Swedish king Gustav Adolf was assigned the role of a second Judas Maccabee; see Wolfgang Harms, "Gustav Adolf als christlicher Alexander und Judas Makkabaeus: Zu Formen des Wertens von Zeitgeschichte in Flugschrift und illustriertem Flugblatt um 1632," *Wirkendes Wort* 4 (1985): 168–183.

²³ *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1: *Trent to Vatican II*, ed. Norman P. Tanner (London: Sheed & Ward, 1990), 664: "Si quis autem libros ipsos integros cum omnibus suis partibus, prout in Ecclesia catholica legi consueverunt et in veteri vulgata latina editione habentur, pro sacris et canonicis non susceperit, et traditiones

The Maccabees were, for example, present as both the spearhead for true faith and a normative reference in the political writings of the Irish Catholics, in the period leading up to their rebellion of 1641. Jerrold Casway in fact sees “Gaelic Maccabeanism” as an important root of the rebellion.²⁴ If this thesis is correct, in their fusion of national and confessional motives the rebellious Irish made the fate of the Maccabees their own: like themselves, the Maccabees were confronted with an alien power – the Seleucids – whose rule threatened to destroy Jewish cultural and religious self-determination.²⁵ Before the battle of Benburb in 1646, Owen Roe O’Neill expressly called on his troops to hold out as Maccabees against the English enemy. Both the contents and mode of expression of his speech evoked the model offered by the speech Judas Maccabeus delivered to rally his own troops for battle.²⁶

Casway sees the spiritual sources of this political biblicism as being located in the European continent’s Irish colleges, especially those in the Low Countries, for example, in the Franciscan monastery in Leuven where many Irish Catholics found shelter. Often they had served, as had O’Neill himself, in the Irish regiment fighting for the Spaniards against the Dutch rebels. Here the exiled Catholic Irish could observe, at close proximity, how in their struggle against the Spanish rulers the Dutch Protestants took on, through their identification with the Nation of Israel in the Old Testament, a specific identity endowing them with additional faith in the correctness of their cause.²⁷ In

praedictas sciens et prudens contempserit: anathema sit.” See also Hubert Jedin, *Geschichte des Konzils von Trient*, 4 vols. (Freiburg: Herder, 1949–75), 2: 42–82.

²⁴ Jerrold Casway, “Gaelic Maccabeanism: The Politics of Reconciliation,” in *Political Thought in Seventeenth-Century Ireland: Kingdom or Colony*, ed. Jane H. Ohlmeyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 176–188.

²⁵ We can assume that within the Gaelic population the Maccabean argument had a different, presumably much stronger effect than among the so-called Old English, i.e. the Anglo-Irish who had remained Catholic: English rule was only alien to the Gaelic population in a double, cultural and confessional sense. On the various population groups in Ireland, see Ute Lotz-Heumann, *Die doppelte Konfessionalisierung in Irland: Konflikt und Koexistenz im 16. und in der ersten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 13, *Spätmittelalter und Reformation*, n.s. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 219–229.

²⁶ Casway, “Gaelic Maccabeanism” 178. Cf. 1 Macc 3:20–22.

²⁷ Casway, “Gaelic Maccabeanism” 185–187. In Martin Van Gelderen’s otherwise instructive work on political thinking at the time of the Netherlands’ revolt against Spain, biblicism is generally neglected; Martin Van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt 1555–1590* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); but see Paul Regan, “Calvinism and the Dutch Israel Thesis,” in *Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe*, vol. 2, *The Later Reformation*, ed. Bruce Gordon, St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Aldershot: Scolar, 1996), 91–106. On

this way, placed under another confessional sign, the example of Israel could be used for the Irish struggle; at the same time, the Maccabees took on a central role as models for the Irish Catholics.

In any event, in O'Neill's speech to his soldiers, the Maccabees served as more than a normative example that was meant to be emulated; the Irish Catholic identification with the Maccabees contained several political messages at once, the motif of defending one's own land against violent conquest from abroad here blending with that of a struggle to preserve one's own religion to produce powerful incentive for resisting English rule. At the same time, the Maccabean reference furnished the rebellious Irish with certainty of divine succor and resulting victory, an assumption that proved mistaken in the long run and would be paid for with innumerable dead and Ireland's complete colonization.²⁸

In a broader context, in the absence of doubt regarding the Maccabean books' canonicity, they could be understood, like the other Old Testament texts, as attestations of *lex Dei*, as we see, for example, in John Floyd's tractate *God and the King*.²⁹ Based with a group of his allies in the Jesuit college of St. Omer in the Spanish Netherlands, Floyd tried to have an impact on the debate in England through numerous controversial theological texts.³⁰ He thus became caught up in the debate about the oath of allegiance by which all Catholics in England were meant to demonstrate their loyalty to the king, a debate which resulted in the denial of the pope's right to excommunication and the freeing of royal subjects from their duty to obedience.³¹ This was the context for *God and the King*, which was aimed at an

the reception of the Israel motif among the exiled Irish see Marc Caball, "Providence and Exile in Early-Seventeenth-Century Ireland," *Irish Historical Studies* 29 (1994): 174–188. In general see James Canon O'Boyle, *The Irish Colleges on the Continent* (Dublin et al.: Browne & Nolan, 1935).

²⁸ See Lotz-Heumann, *Die doppelte Konfessionalisierung*, 213–218; Nicholas P. Canny, "The attempted Anglicization of Ireland in the Seventeenth Century: An Exemplar of 'British History'," in *Three Nations – A Common History? England, Scotland, Ireland and British History, c. 1600–1920*, ed. Ronald G. Asch, vol. 23, Arbeitskreis Deutsche England-Forschung: Veröffentlichung (Bochum: Brockmeyer, 1993), 49–82.

²⁹ John Floyd, *God and the King* (St. Omer: 1620).

³⁰ Peter Milward, "Floyd, John (1572–1649)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 20: 186–187.

³¹ On the oath see Michael C. Questier, "Loyalty, Religion and State Power in Early Modern England: English Romanism and the Jacobean Oath of Allegiance," *Historical Journal* 40 (1997): 311–329; Johann Peter Sommerville, *Jacobean Political Thought*

identically-named text by the Protestant theologian Richard Mocket that had been printed with special royal privilege, then being selected at Jacob I's explicit instructions as a textbook for school use.³²

Where in the style of a catechism, Mocket derived royal authority to rule exclusively from God and stressed royal infallibility, in his response Floyd appealed to the Maccabees as well as to the person of Esther not merely as historical examples, but in order to demonstrate the divine sanctioning of resistance to tyranny in defense of true faith. In making this argument, he sweepingly lay claim to the authority of the Church fathers, who, he indicated, "held it lawfull for the people of the Iewes to use forcible resistance against their tyrannous Souveraigne."³³ For Floyd, if the Jewish nation could legitimately claim a right to resist a tyrant, then present-day nations had to be granted the same right. Here the Maccabees were no longer being presented as a historical example, but as a demonstration of divinely sanctioned popular political primacy in face of unjustly acting monarchs. For the above-suggested reasons, the English Protestants would never embrace such an approach to the Maccabean texts.

2

In this light, can the radical Protestants writing in England in the decades before the civil war's outbreak be in any way conceived as heirs of the Maccabees? In order to answer this question positively, we need first to briefly consider the biblicism practiced in the Maccabean books themselves. 1 Maccabees is, in fact, full of explicit references to older texts in the Old Testament together with inherited and established descriptive patterns. The text thus expressly underscores that in killing a Jew who intends to sacrifice to heathen gods, Mattathias reveals as much zeal for the law as did Phinehas before him (1 Macc 2:26). And when Mattathias is dying, he offers his sons an

and the Controversy over the Oath of Allegiance (Ph.D. diss., Cambridge University, 1981).

³² [Richard Mocket], *God and the King: Or, A Dialogue Shewing That Our Sovereign Lord the King of England, Being Immediate Under God Within His Dominions, Doth Rightly Claim Whatsoever Is Required by the Oath of Allegiance* (London, 1615); *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, ed. James Francis Larkin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 1: 355–356.

³³ Floyd, *God and the King*, 100–101.

ideal list of ancestors, here naming, among others, Abraham, Joseph, Joshua, Caleb, David, Elijah, and Daniel. But he himself especially stresses “Pinehas, our father” as something like a spiritual ancestor of the Maccabees (1 Macc 2:52–60).³⁴

We also find an indirect reception in the Maccabean books of texts from the Old Testament that were already considered canonic. Hence the depiction of the Maccabees’ religious war is analogous to what we find in accounts of the settlement period, the time of judges, and that of the early kingdom. In addition, the Maccabees’ warfare minutely follows the rules for war prescribed in Deuteronomy in the ban passed on hostile cities, the approach taken to the conquered populace, and heathen places of worship, to name a few.³⁵ This ancestral choice and consciously chosen scriptural tradition is what the radical English Protestants shared with the Maccabees. Not only the Maccabees, but also the clerical critics of England’s political course many centuries later chose Phinehas as an ancestor.³⁶ And to bolster their call for resistance to all idolatry, these clerics drew their examples from the same reservoir of Old Testament texts, above all Deuteronomy, but also the historical texts, with Judges here taking a prominent role.

This interpretive process gained initial popularity during the 1620s, when Protestant clerics pressed Jacob I to stand by the Protestants in the Thirty Years’ War and declare war on Spain, and then again from 1640 onward, when many clerics called on the Long Parliament to restore the Church’s purity and prepare an end to the church-politics of Charles I. In both cases, the central argument was the struggle against idolatry. Already in 1618, John Everard offered a typical example of a sermon devoted to this struggle; the sermon was delivered to soldiers in the royal guard. Everard here denied any legitimacy to a peace purchased through an arrangement with idolaters. To present his alternative, he recalled Samuel’s confrontation with Saul, declaring

³⁴ Kai Trampedach, “Die Hasmonäer und das Problem der Theokratie,” in *Die Bibel*, 37–65, esp. 40–48.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 42 et seqq.

³⁶ This form of biblicism was by no means limited to England. See Robert von Friedeburg, *Widerstandsrecht und Konfessionskonflikt: Notwehr und Gemeiner Mann im deutsch-britischen Vergleich 1530 bis 1669*, Schriften zur europäischen Rechts- und Verfassungsgeschichte (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1999), 13–14, for an early example from the time of the struggle of German Protestants for the right to self-expression in the Old Reich.

that “warre with amalek is the condition of Israels peace.”³⁷ Everard offered many additional examples from the historical texts of Scripture to demonstrate the divinely sanctioned nature of just warfare;³⁸ he especially focused on Gideon and Samson as Biblical warriors meriting imitation.³⁹

Other authors emphasized that only God decided over victory and defeat and that God Himself had the role of chief commander.⁴⁰ A few years after Everard’s text appeared, Thomas Taylor directly addressed members of the lower house in a sermon meant to demonstrate that religious war merited highest priority.⁴¹ This point was trumpeted by many other clerics for whom the policies of peace and reconciliation of Jacob I were a thorn in the eye.⁴² First of all the pope, then the Spaniards with their troops, and not least of all the Catholics living in England were here all considered spiritual descendants of the Amalekites. Often, the propagation of military engagement against the Catholics on the continent was tied to the demand for a thorough doing away with all Catholic remainders in England.⁴³ These themes would

³⁷ John Everard, *The arriereban a sermon preached to the company of the military yarde, at St. Andrewes Church in Holborne at St. Iames his day last* (London: 1618), 13.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 20–22.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 13–14.

⁴⁰ Thomas Jackson, *Iudah must into captivitie: Six sermons on Ierem. 7.16. Lately preached in the Cathedrall Church of Christ in Canterburie, and elsewhere* (London: 1622), 63, with reference to Ex 15:3 and the book of Joshua; Alexander Leighton, *Speculum belli sacri: Or The looking-glasse of the holy war* ([Amsterdam]: 1624), 24–25.

⁴¹ Thomas Taylor, *Two sermons the one A heavenly voice, calling all Gods people out of Romish Babylon* (London: 1624), Preface A2v: “And all godly Parlements (whereof we have not a few examples in Scripture) first settled the causes of God and Religion, and then the causes of the King, and of Civill Iustice, as all the companies gathered for the Lords battels, must say on everie side of the Host, *For the Lord and for Gideon*”.

⁴² Hence the Venetian ambassador reported from London in 1622 that the sermons increasingly resembled seditious speeches; *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts relating to English Affairs, existing in the Archives and collections of Venice*, ed. Allen B. Hinds (London: Longman, 1912), 17: no. 603, 445 (21. Sept. 1622); in general Thomas Cogswell, *The blessed revolution: English politics and the coming of war, 1621–1624*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 17; Marvin A. Breslow, *A Mirror of England: English Puritan Views of Foreign Nations, 1618–1640*, vol. 84, Harvard Historical Studies (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), chap. 2; Thomas Cogswell, “England and the Spanish Match,” in *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603–1642*, ed. Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (London: Longman, 1989), 107–133.

⁴³ Robert Jenison, *The height of Israels heathenish idolatrie* (London: 1621); Jackson, *Iudah must into captivitie*, 90–97; Theophilus Higgons, *Mystical Babylon, or Papall Rome. A treatise upon those words, Apocal. 18.2* (London: 1624), 142. Parliament

soon take on sharpness on account of Jacob's policies. Jacob was considering marrying his son Charles to the Spanish infanta Doña Maria, for the sake of a confessional reconciliation that would bring Europe closer to peace.

These plans lent the call for battle against idolatry with an ambivalence that could always be turned against the king. Thomas Jackson thus recalled the fate of the city of Meros, which maintained distance from Israel's struggle against the Moabites and was thus cursed by God. In the context of Jacob's marriage project, the figure of Phinehas, chosen by Jackson as a model,⁴⁴ itself took on an entirely new meaning. For in the end, Phinehas' exemplary action consisted in ending the relation between a Jewish man and Midianite woman by driving his spear through both (Num 25). Another critic, Thomas Scott, then established a direct tie between the Spanish infanta and Phinehas' deed by describing her as a "Moabite woman."⁴⁵ Finally, some years later, in a richly subversive tract entitled *Syons Plea against the Prelacy*, Alexander Leighton, while not referring to Phinehas directly, in essence lamented that no one would take up his role by following the motto "Come and see how zealous I will be for the Kingdome of Christ, against those his enemies, that will not have him to raigne over them."⁴⁶ For Leighton, zeal for God was meant to infect both the clerics and the royal office-bearers, causing them to actively clear away everything running contrary to divine law and rule.

But God's direct intervention in events was not, by any means, to be passively awaited. As Leighton saw things, such intervention had occurred in the collapse of the residence of the French ambassador in Blackfriars, London. In fact, in a tragic accident taking place on October 26, 1623, when several hundred Catholic believers gathered on the building's roof to hear a sermon by the Jesuit Robert Drury ninety of them died when the roof collapsed.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, waiting

itself took up these protests, as becomes clear in a petition from December 3 1621 in which the members spoke up against any softening of the existing anti-Catholic laws (Art. 5); John Rushworth, *Historical Collections* (London: 1659), 1: 40–43.

⁴⁴ Jackson, *Judah must into captivitee*, 35.

⁴⁵ Thomas Scott, *Digitus Dei* (London: 1623), 32. Although he did not mention the example of Phinehas, he marginally indicated the appropriate biblical passage. See also Jenison, *The height of Israels heathenish idolatrie*, Sec. III, 27.

⁴⁶ Alexander Leighton, *An appeal to the Parliament; or Sions plea against the prelatie* [Amsterdam, 1629], 170.

⁴⁷ Leighton, *An appeal*, 168–169. On the episode at Blackfriars see Alexandra

for God to Himself take up the punishment of enemies of faith was a mistaken stance; rather, what counted was to do oneself what was needed to restore divine law. This was an appeal directed, as indicated, especially at the clergy and office bearers,⁴⁸ a fact that points to Phinehas' paradigmatic significance in Leighton's argumentation. For with his violent deed, Phinehas had restored divine order and averted God's tribunal. The appeal thus emerged as one aimed at emulating the model Phinehas offered. The appeal gained considerable explosiveness from Leighton's interpretation of the murder of the Duke of Buckingham, the most influential advisor to Charles I, as an act inspired by God.⁴⁹ An interpretation implicitly placed the assassin, John Felton, in the role of Phinehas, where royal justice had naturally condemned him to death as a murderer and traitor.⁵⁰ In any event, Leighton was forced to answer for his tractate before the Star Chamber and paid a high price: both the cutting away of his nose and ears and branding with a double "S" for "Sower of Sedition."⁵¹ Clearly, the obedience to God he called for was perceived as contradicting the obedience expected by the worldly authorities.

Finally, Theophilus Higgons' sermon on "Mystical Babylon" serves as an instructive example of how the force of the political message could be further intensified through fusing examples of Deuteronomic history with the Apocalypse of John. Higgons saw Jacob as facing a

Walsham, "The Fatall Vesper": Providentialism and Anti-Popery in late Jacobean London," *Past and Present* 144 (1994): 37–87.

⁴⁸ Leighton, *An Appeal*, 170: "it is a great fault in men of place, both Ministers and Magistrats, that they would have God to doe all the hard worke by himself, and they would come, and gather up the spoyle: but they who will raigne with God, even in the glory of any good work, must do for him, and suffer with him in the doing of the Work."

⁴⁹ Leighton, *An appeal*, 172: "A third thing we looked for, was the removall of the former Favorite, which the Lord effected."

⁵⁰ Alastair Bellany, "Felton, John (d. 1628)," in *Oxford Dictionary National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 19: 283–284; Thomas Cogswell, "John Felton, Popular Political Culture, and the Assassination of the Duke of Buckingham," *Historical Journal* 49 (2006): 357–385. Leighton was not alone in his interpretation. In many pamphlets Felton was designated a new Phinehas or Ehud. A poem even designated him a Maccabee: "Stout Macabee, thy most mighty arm, / With zeal and justice arm'd, hath in truth won / The prize of patriot to a British son", *Poems and Songs Relating to George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, and His Assassination by John Felton, August 23, 1628*, ed. Frederick W. Fairholt (London: Percy Society, 1850), 70.

⁵¹ Stephen Foster, *Notes from the Caroline Underground: Alexander Leighton, the Puritan Triumvirate, and the Laudian Reaction to Nonconformity*, vol. 6, *Studies in British History and Culture* (Connecticut: Archon Books, 1978), 28–32.

duty before God parallel to that of Saul in his time, namely to see to the destruction of Rome, the spiritual descendant of the Amalekites. This instruction was, however, not solely transmitted through the words of a prophet, but through the course of historical events themselves.⁵² The moment had come, Higgons indicated, for delivering the *coup de grâce* to the Whore of Babylon, behind whom no one else was hidden but papacy and its retainers.⁵³ The struggle against the idolaters was not only commanded by God's law, but also represented a salvational duty, that of fulfilling the prophecy of the Antichrist's demise. Were the king to refuse this salvational mission, Higgons held the example of Saul in reserve. Saul had failed to completely extirpate the Amalekites but rather spared their king. Consequently, he was rejected by God and saw his office taken over by David.⁵⁴

The conflict over English peace policies and the marriage project can be understood as a dress rehearsal in which the biblicist narrative of war's salvational necessity was tried out before the English public. The opening performance then took place with convocation of the Long Parliament. During the entire civil war between the king's followers and those of Parliament, it would offer what was meant to be an authoritative commentary on the events. The narrative particularly took on the function of a public performance in the so-called "fast sermons", delivered before assembled members of the lower house in the St. Margaret Parliamentary church starting in mid-1641, then in a regular sequence throughout the war until 1648.⁵⁵ These sermons have

⁵² Higgons, *Mystical babylon*, 72: "You are sent against Rome (as Saul against Amalek) to destroy it with fire, and sword.... Now the time is come [it is past with God] it is now at hand, that you may, you must, you shall take up a temporall against his spirituall Sword" (Off 19, 6).

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 75: "to burne the Whore [Babylon] and to subdue the Beast [the Pope] and so to accomplish that Royall worke, unto which God hath alreadie consecrated them in his holy World."

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 75; see also Thomas Taylor, *Two Sermons, the One A Heavenly Voice, Calling All Gods People Out of Romish Babylon: The Other An Everlasting Record of the Utter Ruine of Romish Amalek* (London: 1624), 4–5.

⁵⁵ See Lori Anne Ferrell, *Government by Polemic: James I, the King's Preachers, and the Rhetorics of Conformity 1603–1625* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 10–19; Paul S. Seaver, *The Puritan Lectureships: The Politics of Religious Dissent 1560–1662* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970), chap. 1 and 2, esp. 55; Lori Anne Ferrell and Peter McCullough, "Revising the Study of the English Sermon," in *The English Sermon Revised: Religion, Literature and History, 1600–1750*, ed. *idem* (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 2001), 2–21; see also Christopher Durston, "Public Days of Fasting and Thanksgiving During the English Revolution," *The Seventeenth Century* 7 (1992): 129–149; Roland Bartle, "The Story of Public Fast

political significance for several reasons. On the one hand, they involve an effort by so-called "Puritan" clerics to dictate a program to Parliamentarians, albeit mostly in encoded form with the help of biblical references. On the other hand, the Parliamentarians were not merely listeners but had actively selected preachers they considered suitable. The sermons' contents would thus have broadly corresponded with the majority views of the lower house. This is also revealed in their publication shortly after delivery with official approval of Parliament, thus assuring their exposure to a broad public. Their status would have been all the higher in that the parliamentarians' own speeches rarely saw print.⁵⁶ They offered the public a specific picture of the actual situation in addition to parliament's self-understanding and salvational purpose.

The specific contents of the demand for holy war leveled at the time of Jacob I were the same as those in the attacks of the 1640s: the war was understood as a struggle against idolatry. There was to be no arrangement with God's enemies but rather their unhesitating punishment. But where in the earlier period the demand was directed towards an external enemy, the Roman Church, in the later period it was also inwardly directed towards a reformation of the English Church. The Church's various "Achans" were to be destroyed, which is to say, the English bishops with Archbishop William Laud at their head. At this time, Laud was already under arrest waiting for trial, accused of being at the vanguard of idolatry in the Church.⁵⁷ Idolatry itself, as well, was to be destroyed, principally, the newly built chancels, kneeling during

Days in England" *Anglican Theological Review* 37 (1955): 190–200. On the fast sermons themselves see Paul Christianson, "Expectation to Militance: Reformers and Babylon in the First Two Years of the Long Parliament," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 24 (1973): 225–244; John F. Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament: Puritanism During the English Civil Wars, 1640–8* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969); Hugh Trevor-Roper, "The Fast Sermons of the Long Parliament," in *Essays in British History Presented to Sir Keith Feiling*, ed. Trevor-Roper (London and New York: Macmillan et al., 1964), 85–138.

⁵⁶ See Alan D.T. Cromartie, "The Printing of Parliamentary Speeches November 1640–July 1642," *The Historical Journal* 33 (1990): 23–44.

⁵⁷ Samuel Fairclough, *The Troublers Troubled, or Achan Condemned, and Executed: A Sermon, Preached Before Sundry of the Honourable House of Commons at Westminster, April, 4. 1641...* (London: 1641), 11 and 24; Anonymus, *Mercuries Message Defended, Against the Vain, Simple and Absurd Cavils of Thomas Herbert a Ridiculous Ballad-Maker* (London: 1641), 2; similarly William Bridge, *Babylons Downfall* (London: 1641), 19. Edmund Calamy used Achan as a synonym of general sinfulness in *Englands Looking-Glasse* (London: 1641), A3r.

the Eucharist, and the crucifix at the altar.⁵⁸ Not least of all the rebellious Irish were to be destroyed in 1641 after they had used the English monarchy's inner power struggles to fight for their own cause.

In order to wage a campaign against the Irish without furnishing the hated king with an army, Parliament would have needed to raise and command its own militia an unprecedented step that the king would have potentially considered high treason.⁵⁹ The sermon Stephen Marshall delivered on February 23rd, 1642, tellingly titled "Meroz Cursed," shows how the holy-war narrative could be used to propagate the idea of such a militia. The text very quickly gained prominence as Marshall not only delivered it around sixty times from various pulpits but had it printed a number of times.⁶⁰ In this manner, he did whatever could be done with the power of the word to bring England closer to war.

In the sermon, Marshall took his central example from biblical Israel's time of settlement and battle with various Canaanite peoples. In Deborah's song of victory (Judges 5:23) the city of Meroz is cursed for not having come to God's help. Marshall takes the question of whether God has been granted or denied necessary support and rendered it into a general standard of political behavior. The figure of Yael, who showed no hesitation in serving God's cause by perfidiously murdering the Canaanite captain Sisera (Judges 4:19–22) here took on an exemplary function for Marshall. As an overall solution, he referred to the anathema God pronounced on the overly proud city of Moab: "Accursed is the one who is slack in doing the work of the Lord; and accursed is the one who keeps back the sword from bloodshed" (Jer 48:10). It was not possible, he insisted, to be neutral in conflicts involving the Church:⁶¹ when maintaining the upper hand against

⁵⁸ See John S. Morrill, "The Attack on the Church of England In the Long Parliament, 1640–1642," in *History, Society and the Churches: Essays In Honour of Owen Chadwick*, ed. Derek E. Beales and Geoffrey F.A. Best (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 105–124.

⁵⁹ The Militia Bill is published in the *Commons' Journals*, vol. 2, 406. The king's final rejection came on February 28, 1642; *Commons' Journals*, vol. 2, 459–460. On the debate in detail, see Edward, Earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion* (Oxford: 1732), 4: 95–99.

⁶⁰ Trevor-Roper, "Fast-Sermons," 99.

⁶¹ Stephen Marshall, *Meroz Cursed, or, A Sermon Preached to the Honourable House of Commons, at Their Late Solemn Fast, Febr. 23, 1641* (London: 1642), 22–24.

Babylon was at stake, what otherwise would have to be named barbaric was not only allowed, but was even necessary.⁶²

Marshall summarized his stance with the following words: *salus ecclesiae suprema lex*.⁶³ With this adaptation of Cicero's dictum *salus populi suprema lex esto* he explicitly relativized the boundaries of all existing laws and traditions, to the extent that they stood in the way of completing the Church's reformation and taking up the battle against Ireland's Catholic rebels.⁶⁴ His dual message that the Church's salvation was the highest law and that saving England from the claws of the Whore of Babylon and subsequently from God's anathema was a salvational necessity imposed a duty on the members of Parliament to come to God's aid. His biblical examples offered rich material for contemplating what was to be done with all those who stood opposed to these goals.

In his sermon, Marshall was clearly warning one group of Parliamentarians in particular to hold their swords unsheathed: those who were hesitating to approve the decisive step of establishing an army subordinate to Parliament alone in order to wage war against the Irish rebels and, if necessary, against the troops of the king and his followers. A little less than two weeks later, on March 5th, the step was taken, rendering a civil war unavoidable.⁶⁵ But in the words of John F. Wilson, "as far as the Pulpit in St. Margaret's was concerned, civil war" to which we may add, civil war as a conflict between Jerusalem and Babylon "had already begun."⁶⁶

⁶² *Ibid.*, 11–12, referring to Psalm 137, 8–9: "Yet if this worke be to revenge Gods Church against *Babylon*, he is a *blessed man that takes and dashes the little ones against the stones*."

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 46: "many *great things* are yet to bee done; much rubbish to be removed; many obstructions to bee cleared, many enimies to be overthrown. *Ireland* is to be relieved, Religion to bee established"; see also Cic., *De Leg.* 3.3.8.

⁶⁵ *The Stuart Constitution 1603–1688: Documents and Commentary*, ed. John Philipps Kenyon (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press², 1986), 219–220; on the war's context see Conrad Russell, *The Fall of the British Monarchies 1637–1642* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 479–480.

⁶⁶ Wilson, *Pulpit*, 64.

To what extent did the clerical critics of Jacob's peace policies in the Thirty Years' War and the St. Margaret preachers move along the Maccabees' path? There is an especially broad correspondence between the texts we have looked at here, which is to say between the Maccabean books on the one hand, the numerous sermons and tractates emerging from radical Protestant England on the other hand. For a start, the authors made use of the same reservoir of Old Testament literature (i.e. Deuteronomic history) to generate their political arguments. At the same time, they developed a comparable narrative out of this history, a narrative that was in any event firmly established already in the cited texts themselves. Its essential elements were the divine injunction to avoid any form of idolatry, the conditional covenant between God and man, in which the attitude towards idol worship was decisive for the collective salvation of the people, and an internal and external militancy necessary to eradicate idolatry from the world. Both the Maccabees and the radical Protestant clerics before and during the English Civil War embraced what Jan Assmann has termed the "mosaic differentiation", that is, the opposition articulated in the Old Testament "between true and false in the religion, the true God and the false gods, true doctrine and erroneous doctrine, knowledge and ignorance."⁶⁷ Representatives of both the earlier and later movements transferred the narrative to the political situation of their own age, applying the "mosaic differentiation" to justify militancy vis-à-vis the political rulers. In this sense the Protestant preachers of the Civil War were of one mind with the Maccabees.

Nevertheless, this extensive political-theological correspondence did not involve the taking on of an important role as models in England's political discourse or the Maccabean books emerging as referential texts in the debate. The exemplary role Phinehas had for the radical preachers was largely denied to the Maccabees. And although the English Protestants did grant a military leader such as Judas Maccabeus a certain exemplary status, this did not carry over to the Maccabean books as apocryphal, non-canonic texts. Lying outside the corpus of

⁶⁷ Jan Assmann, *Die Mosaische Unterscheidung oder der Preis des Monotheismus* (Munich/Vienna: Hanser, 2003), 12–13. See also the chapter by Jan Assmann in this volume.

Holy Scripture, they could not take on the role of argumentative reservoir in the political language of biblicism.

But at the same time, as indicated, the English Protestants did share a great deal of the Maccabean political theology. In the form it took for the Protestants, it would not remain without consequences in seventeenth century England. To the extent that ongoing events in that country at the times of the marriage project and the Long Parliament were perceived and transmitted in narrative fashion in the sense of the Old Testament, that is, with a concentration on the alternatives of idolatry or obedience to God, very specific options for (or necessities of) action resulted from this narrative.

Firstly, at the center of all that is transpiring stands God. His law is to be emulated, His instructions obeyed. Obedience bears fruit, a lesson demonstrated in the narrow victory over the Spanish armada in 1588 and the timely discovery of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605. On the other hand, disobedience leads to destruction.

Secondly, since God is considered the authority who steers events, the king only has a subsidiary function as chief guardian, who ensures full compliance with God's law. There is no room for political maneuvering within this schema. Hence, when the king abandoned his designated role, as in the case of the planned alliance with the Spanish royal house, massive criticism was the consequence and his reputation as "godly ruler" (the case with Jacob) or royal rule itself (the case with Charles I) was then at stake.

Finally, the extensive focus on idolatry placed concerns regarding both confession and Church policy at the center of political sphere. To the extent that Deuteronomic history was drawn on as an argument and divine law was introduced as a lastingly obligatory norm, scope of action was automatically minimized. What was understood as not complying with divinely ordained norms was meant to be branded as idolatry and extirpated. In this way all champions of a deviant standpoint were in danger of losing their legitimacy, their office, and sometimes their life. Both Archbishop Laud and Charles I would experience this with their own bodies.

“IF TO FALL, FOR LAWS, RELIGION, LIBERTY, WE FALL”:
GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL’S MACCABEE ORATORIOS

Daniel Weidner

At the end of 1745, at the recommendation of the Prince of Wales, George Frideric Handel contacted Thomas Morell (1703–1846) to request a libretto. In a later letter, the cleric and philologist Morell described the start of their collaboration:

Upon this I thought I could do as well as some had gone before me, and within 2 or 3 days carried him the first Act of *Judas Maccabeus*, which he approved of. “Well, says he, and how are you to go on?” “Why, we are to suppose an engagement, and that the Israelites have conquered, and so begin with a chorus as Fallen is the Foe or something like it.” “No, I will have this”, and began working it, as it is, upon the Harpsichord... “Well, go on.” “I will bring you more tomorrow.” “No, something now, So fall thy Foes, O Lord that will do”, and immediately carried the composition as we have it in that admirable chorus.¹

Following this episode, Morell wrote a libretto that, in line with 1 Macc. 2–8, recounted how the Jews, threatened by oppression and foreign rule, were liberated by the charismatic commander Judas Maccabeus. Intentionally and manifestly, this narrative suited the historical situation facing Great Britain in the mid-eighteenth century. In 1745, after a defeat at the hands of France, England was threatened by the Jacobite revolt. Charles Edward, grandson of the last Stuart king, Jacob II (also named “Bonnie Prince Charlie”), landed in Scotland and marched successfully southward before an absence of French support forced him to turn back. In April 1746 he was decisively defeated by Lord Cumberland in the Battle of Culloden. The subsequent extremely brutal policies of repression directed at the Scots endowed Cumberland with the sobriquet “the butcher”; but it did not put a halt to a mood of patriotic enthusiasm out of which emerged, among other things, the English anthem.

¹ Cited from Winton Dean, *Handel’s Dramatic Oratorios and Masques* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 461.

Morell and Handel aligned themselves with this patriotic movement, even dedicating “Judas Maccabeus” to “His Royal Highness Prince William, Duke of Cumberland, this Faint Portraiture of a Truly Wise, Valiant, and Virtuous Commander.” Indeed, the orientation around Cumberland may well explain the choice of subject for the oratorio, with its neglect of Judas’ enemies, allowing attention to be drawn to Cumberland’s moral strengths rather than his bloody deeds.² On April 1 1747, “Judas Maccabeus” received its inaugural performance in London’s Covent Garden Theatre, soon proving itself a great success: it was performed five times in the first two weeks alone, with over fifty performances taking place in Handel’s lifetime. The oratorio was to become an established part of the British performative repertoire ever since.

Probably motivated by this initial success, Handel and Morell produced another Maccabee oratorio, “Alexander Balus,” its action continuing that of “Judas Maccabeus” in that it presents the tragic case of the commander Alexander Balus, recounted in 1 Macc. 10–11. However, this oratorio was considerably less successful than its predecessor. Here as well, Morell has furnished us with an anecdote concerning his work with Handel, this time on the final aria:³

I cannot help telling you, that, when Mr. Handell first read it, he cried out: “D-n your Iambics”. “Don’t put yourself in a passion, they are easily Trochees.” Trochees, what are Trochees? “Why, the very reverse of Iambics, by leaving out a syllable in every line, as instead of ‘Convey me to some peaceful shore,’ ‘Lead me to some peaceful shore’.” “That is what I want.” “I will step into the parlour, and alter them immediately.” I went down and returned with them altered in about 3 minutes; when he would have them as they were.

Although some aspects of this anecdote suggest a tale, it does make clear how painstakingly the text was adapted to the music’s needs, thus only playing a minor role in itself. An analysis of the libretto is correspondingly problematic – all the more so in that any direct explanation of why Handel and Morell had recourse to the Maccabean material is lacking as is a literary tradition around which they could orient themselves and that might explain particularities of

² See Ruth Smith, “The Meaning of Morell’s libretto of *Judas Maccabeus*,” *Music and Letters* 79 (1998): 62–63, including additional documentation of the general reverence for Cumberland.

³ Cited from Dean, *Handel’s Dramatic Oratorios*, 482.

"Judas Maccabeus." Consequently, it makes little sense to compare the libretto directly with the biblical text as its "source". We should note that in general such a procedure, while often used in literary studies, not only overestimates the importance of the literary text for the theater but also underestimates the cultural function of the Bible, which in its omnipresence is more than a literary intertext.⁴

Despite all this, the text is not entirely insignificant; it is more than a mere excuse for the music. But, as suggested, its meaning does not emerge through a comparison of text and source, but only through a detour to the question of genre. The oratorios are interesting precisely in a generic light: their mix of theatrical and liturgical forms, of operatic arias and choruses stemming from church music, fuses the outwardly contradictory into a new form of art; this in turn will itself play a decisive role in the development of a new relationship between religion, art, and politics in the course of the eighteenth century. For through the genre of the oratorio, the Bible remains present in the public art of Europe's middle classes, while dramatizations of biblical material were rather an exception in eighteenth and nineteenth-century theater. We are here concerned, then, with a successful model. In this respect it is worth recalling that for a long time "Judas Maccabeus" was considered one of Handel's two most important oratorios along with his "Messiah," even as it is presently somewhat forgotten and assessed entirely differently.⁵ In what follows I will thus first outline the contents, form, and dramatic structure of both Maccabee oratorios; next consider the contemporary aesthetic debates on music in particular; and then examine the special form of patriotism here being expressed, and which stamps, finally, the eventful reception history of the two oratorios.

⁴ For a methodological critique of such comparison of text and biblical source see my essay "Glaubens-Drama und Theater: Théodore de Bèzes Bibeldrama Abraham Sacrifiant," *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift*, n.s., 58 (2008): 127–147.

⁵ Dean, one of the most important present-day Handel researchers, thus writes as follows: "After so many triumphs on the grandest scale Handel has lowered his aim, and achieved not so much a work of art as a victory concert." (Dean, *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios*, 466).

1

As defined by its subtitle, "Judas Maccabeus" is a "sacred drama," a generic designation implying an oxymoron. The contradiction naturally lies in the lack of performance: since the Blasphemy Act of 1605, any scenic representation of biblical material had been forbidden on Great Britain's stages. This was no isolated phenomenon: everywhere in Protestant Europe, the Reformation produced a brief flowering of biblical drama, followed by its rapid and nearly complete disappearance, a development resulting not only from religious misgivings but also from a shift in theatrical taste. Put briefly, the humanistic rejection of medieval dramatic forms in favor of an imitation of antique theater made it very difficult to represent the sacred on stage. The "sacred drama" as a genre is not "dramatic" in the modern sense of presenting essential action and verbal confrontation; what is "dramatic" is rather the variation of different passions simultaneously represented by the music and evoked within the listeners. This process unfolds, in turn, in various forms, with the two Maccabee oratorios themselves possibly standing for two different types of oratorio: "Alexander Balus" containing all moments of Baroque drama or opera, "Judas Maccabeus" leaning, in contrast, on the church-music tradition of the anthem.

Let us begin with the type represented by "Alexander Balus," rich as it is in action and standing closer to the modern understanding of "drama." The oratorio recounts, as indicated, the story of the commander Alexander Balus, who has acceded to the throne of the Syrian *diadochos* Demetrius and has formed an alliance with the Jews, who are now being led by Jonathan, Judas Maccabeus's brother, following Judas' death. Alexander asks for the hand of Cleopatra, princess of Egypt; her father, Ptolemy, agrees, but only in order to have him in his power and kill him. This actually takes place in the third act, during which first Alexander, then Ptolemy himself fall, with Jonathan and the Jews finally celebrating the justice of providence.

The love story here plays a decisive and broadly exploited role for the course of the action; the story articulates the typically baroque theme of the relation between power and affect. Namely, even the strongest are conquered by love: "Heroes may boast their mighty deeds, / And talk of conquests in high strains: / Yet oft more pow'rful beauty leads /

The conqueror captive in chains" (no. 22).⁶ The intrigue is also constructed around this passion, which propels the tragic action and also typically baroque is played out in the twilight of courtly dissemblance and betrayal, for instance when a servant warns Alexander that "A base ungrateful man, / Covering fell purpose with the specious mask / Of friendship, plots against thy throne, thy life" (no. 29).⁷ The different *personae* are now characterized within the framework of this intrigue. Scheming Ptolemy thus sings the typical aria of the radically villainous character: "Virtue, thou ideal name, / All thy honours I disclaim; / Vain delight of coward minds! / Bold ambition knows no law, / Active souls, like mine, to awe, / Raging fierce as boist'rous winds" (no. 37). Alexander is himself repeatedly characterized as a commander, a lover, a ruler, and so forth; and beyond this his character is subsumed to the radical reversal accompanying the tragic fall. Following the loss of his wife, he reacts with the classic aria of vengeance (no. 50):

Fury, with red sparkling eyes,
Rise, in all thy terrors rise;
All around destruction deal!
That revenge may give some ease,
Or cold death a kind release
To the horrid pains I feel.

Musical means animated accompaniment and strong articulation are also used to present Alexander's passion. In this respect, it is both remarkable and typical that within this aria itself, emotions shift from rage to submission and from solace in death back to rage through the *da capo* form. In general, it needs to be stressed that here, as elsewhere in baroque drama, affects are by no means expressed directly; they are addressed from a certain distance. In this manner the representation is rhetorically structured in a consistent way.

But alongside this strand of tragic action by the pagan commander, there is another such strand, namely, the story of the Israelites, which is more or less skillfully tied to the main action. The Israelites represent

⁶ I refer to the oratorios' text according to the number in the libretto of Handel's first edition: Georg Friedrich Handel, "Judas Maccabaeus: A Sacred Drama, Words by Thomas Morell," London 1747; "Alexander Balus: An Oratorio, Words by Thomas Morell," London 1748.

⁷ The inverse form of dissemblance itself becomes an object of the Israelite chorus: "O calumny, on virtue waiting, / Shadow-like, yet virtue hating" (no. 31). The entire action thus plays itself out in a shadow-realm of deception and mistrust.

Alexander's faithful followers as opposed to the treacherous confederates. They also stand for true faith in contrast to paganism. Jonathan, leader of the Jews, wishes Alexander much luck in his revenge, but has doubts regarding his prospects: "But oh, I fear the gods, / The creature gods he trusteth cannot help! / They are no gods, but mere delusion all" (no. 53). A musically central aria follows, "To God all victory belongs" (no. 54), hence the commander's rage and self-importance are in a sense commented on by the proper religious perspective and surrender to the unfathomable path of providence. This is repeated in the conclusion. While Cleopatra's maidservant Aspasia interprets the fall of Alexander as simply a "strange reverse of human fate" (no. 52), Jonathan follows up on this directly with a higher perspective: "To God [...] / To Him, almighty, greatest, best, / Jehovah, Lord of Hosts confest, / All victory belongs" (no. 54). Kings do fall, but they do so not through blind fate, but rather along the providential path, which always protects Israel. For this reason, the oratorio also has something like a twofold finale: Cleopatra awaits her tragic death in stoic renunciation while the music dies out in highly effective fashion (no. 63):

Convey me to some peaceful shore,
Where no tumultuous billows roar,
Where life, though joyless, still is calm,
And sweet content is sorrow's balm.
There free from pomp and care, to wait,
Forgetting and forgot, the will of fate.

But that is not the last word. In a manner, modern interpreters have often felt the piece to lack piety, claiming that the suffering of the individual is triumphally overplayed. Jonathan again "corrects" the seemingly tragic dénouement from a higher perspective (no. 64):

Mysterious are thy ways, O Providence!
But always true and just. By Thee kings reign, /
By Thee they fall. – Where is now Egypt's boast?
Where thine, O Syria, laid low in dust,
While chosen Judah triumphs in success,
While chosen Judah triumphs in success.

"Alexander Balus" is thus in a certain way a pagan tragedy with a Jewish commentary; the oratorio has all the features of grand opera, but is supplied with a theological frame.

In contrast, "Judas Maccabeus" seems to consist only of this frame and to possess an entirely different structure, one less focused on

political drama than on a spiritual edification, a focus that itself possesses a distinct dramatic moment. The oratorio begins with Israel's lament for Mattathias and a plea for a new leader who will liberate the people from foreign rule. Judas steps forward, is made leader, and evokes the freedom that needs to be won. In the second act, Judas has defeated Apollonius and is thanking the heavens for the victory when a messenger arrives with news of the next army under Gorgias' command. Israel again sinks into lament but is again summoned to battle by Judas and to purification of the Temple by the high priest, Simon. The shorter, concluding, third act depicts the final Maccabean victory; the returning commander is now acclaimed with choruses of thanks and the Festival of Lights is prepared. At the oratorio's end, a messenger arrives from Rome with the offer of a treaty guaranteeing Judah's independence.

On the level of drama, "Judas Maccabeus" is often judged a failure:⁸ even more strongly than in "Alexander Balus," the real action is stored between the acts. There are no intrigues and no dramatic conflicts, no amorous episodes and no evolution of characters. Here no drama unfolds before the spectator's eyes and no story is actually narrated; rather, commentary is offered on an event that in any case is presumably well known.

Nevertheless, the oratorio's affective structure is deeply ambivalent, as we see for example at the start of the second act, whose restrained instrumentalized D minor chorus, "Fall'n is the foe; so fall Thy foes, O lord" (no. 27), in no way expresses the triumph that would be expected following the victory. The theme of falling is here also realized on the level of melodic motif, as a varied downward shift of a sixth or a fifth.

This theme is then carried forward in the second act, and again re-emerges a little later in the messenger's report of the new threat of falling: "prepare, prepare, or soon we fall a Sacrifice, To great Antiochus"



⁸ See for example Dean, *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios*, 465: "There is virtually no characterization and little plot; hence no contrast, other than an occasional swing between corporate cheerfulness and corporate gloom."

(no. 39). “Fallen” is also a basic figure in the following chorus, whose nature as a lament is underscored by its C minor, largo presentation: “Ah! wretched, wretched Israel! Fall’n, how low” (nos. 40–41). Only a few numbers later, the “falling” is taken up again in one of the musically best known pieces but one that now has an entirely different character. Facing the people’s despair, Judas first calls for taking up arms “Sound an alarm! your silver trumpets sound” (no. 45). Israel then responds in chorus no. 46: “We hear the pleasing dreadful call.” The D minor of the opening chorus is here replaced by the heroically solemn D major, and the instrumentalization is itself completely different: the wind section dominates, the “sound an Alarm” being onomatopoeically realized in the musical motif and the use of trumpets.



Nevertheless, D minor surfaces again and plays an important role in the oratorio. In a highly effective manner, a pause descends on the choric celebration, the chorus inserting an “if to fall” that again raises the possibility of defeat (no. 46.):

We hear, we hear the pleasing dreadful call,
And follow thee to conquest; if to fall,
For laws, religion, liberty, we fall.

Hence the “falling” that opened the second act is here transformed into a profession of faith. The musical arrangement, that is, both the use of trumpets and the choral singing, is here more than mere sound-effect: it underscores the work’s performative element while simultaneously drawing listeners into the basic situation. For the trumpets that Judas commands be blown are really blown and the audience really hears them; in this manner the “we hear” sung by the chorus also contains the “we” of the listeners. These are not only witnesses of an event taking place on stage but, as said, are drawn into the event, a participation pointing back to the liturgical origins of the oratorio form. In actuality, only this performative dimension renders the genre’s form comprehensible; and only this dimension explains the unique success of Handel’s oratorios.

In this light, let us now consider the genre's second element: wherein lies the "sacredness" of sacred drama? Firstly, the sacredness clearly lies in the subject. With few exceptions, Handel's oratorios treat biblical themes; his contemporaries viewed this as one of their very essential qualities. One of Handel's librettists, Newburgh Hamilton, even defined an oratorio as "a musical Drama, whose Subject must be Scriptural, and in which the Solemnity of Church-Musick is agreeably united with the most pleasing Airs of the stage."⁹

Secondly, the text can itself be "sacred." To a large extent, the libretti to Handel's oratorios consisted of literal biblical citations, mainly from the Old Testament and Apocrypha, supplemented by poetic paraphrases of the biblical books and contemporary spiritual lyrics. Where many of Handel's most successful works, such as his "Messiah" and "Israel in Egypt," do without such supplementation, the Maccabee oratorios hardly contain citations. For the libretto to "Judas Maccabeus," Morell used paraphrase, only occasionally offering verbal echoes: "sound an Alarm" might thus evoke 1 Macc. 7:45. Alongside such paraphrases, "Alexander Balus" contains an entire series of literary citations, for example, from Milton's "Paradise Lost" and Shakespeare's "Anthony and Cleopatra."¹⁰

Finally, the music also can be qualified as "sacred." As Hamilton's generic definition makes clear, within that genre of music, ecclesiastical gravity was meant to be combined with profane agreeableness. In the framework of musical history, the oratorio is in fact tied to both the opera and to liturgical music, especially to the passion tradition and that of the British anthems, the liturgical choral singing of biblical texts. The linkage of these two apparently contrary traditions endows the oratorio with its high degree of aesthetic significance; at the same time it reflects a general ambivalence regarding music in eighteenth century aesthetics: its general perception as something both central and problematic, since it apparently can address the affects directly, without a detour through the understanding or vision, thus being

⁹ Cited from Christopher Hogwood, *Handel* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2007), 170. The entire discussion of genre together with its aesthetic and political implications is addressed in Ruth Smith, *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

¹⁰ For details see Dean, *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios*, 484.

highly effective but also potentially uncontrollable. As a rule, Handel's contemporaries solved this ambivalence through a distinction between different forms of music, for instance that between "sacred" and "profane music" or between "a noble manly musick [which] will place virtue in its most beautiful light and [is] the most engaging incentive to it" and "the soft Italian musick [which] relaxes and unnerves the Soul and sings it into weakness."¹¹ Precisely this demarcation from the opera was decisive: the opera was alien because its text was incomprehensible; ruinous, because the wages of the virtuous flow abroad; latently perverse, because *castrati* sang here; and even religiously problematical, because more than once singers were suspected of secretly singing mass under the protection of their incomprehensible language.¹² In such respects the oratorio was the opera's precise opposite number: indigenous in both language and manner of performance and elevated above any suspicion of frivolity through its biblical subject.

As is well known, Handel began to produce his oratorios after the financial disaster of his operatic ventures. In view of the animated nature of these debates, it is not surprising that the pertinent themes are also present in the oratorios. In the second act of "Judas Macabeanus," the Jewish women thus sing as follows in the course of the Temple's purification (no. 50):

Wise men, flatt'ring, may deceive us
With their vain, mysterious art;
[...] But true wisdom can relieve us,
Godlike wisdom from above.

And directly after this scene, a chorus raises its voice against idolatry (nos. 51–52):

We never, never will bow down
To the rude stock or sculptur'd stone.
We worship God, and God alone.

Precisely by virtue of the choir here singing against idolatry, the music can distinguish itself from another false and misleading sort of music. Here again, the music's performance itself conveys what the chorus is expressing: "we never will bow down" is itself sung, and this in a fugal

¹¹ "The Craftsman", March 17, 1727, cited from Dean, *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios*, 131.

¹² For details see Smith, *Handel's Oratorios*, 72f.

choric phrase that is typical for sacred music, and by a Protestant choir for which rejection of idolatry is as self-evident as it is for its public. Through the equation within the oratorio form of Temple song and ecclesiastical music, both are legitimated, and the listeners' identification with the Israelites they see on the stage is strengthened.¹³ And this self-identification is by no means the exception: already the first song in "Judas Maccabeus" not only contains a summons to lament but also emphasizes that Zion is itself mourning "in solemn strains" (no. 2), and the choir then does just that. Again and again, Israel is called on to sing and make music: "Tune your harps to songs of praise" (nos. 31–32); "Sing unto God, and high affections raise" (no. 60). The self-thematization of music here leads anew to an exposition of its performative character, as for instance one of the solemn final choruses of "Judas Maccabeus" makes clear (no. 58):¹⁴

See, the conqu'ring hero comes!
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums.
Sports prepare, the laurel bring,
Songs of triumph to him sing.

The text here makes use of one of the typical forms of verbal staging. *Ekphrasis*, that is, the verbal description of the visual. In several steps, the choir here sings forth what it sees, calls on the listeners to see, and appeals for additional singing in light of what has been seen, finally responding to this appeal through song. Word, image, and tone thus form a richly tense unity in which the listeners are implicitly present, finding themselves addressed at a number of points and being able to understand the song itself as an expression of their own position. In this way, a community forms within the song, a community essential for the oratorios' political contents.

¹³ See Smith, *Handel's Oratorios*, 92: "The defiance of current church music practice strongly associated it with the musical worship in the ancient Jewish temple, and in watching and hearing the oratorio Israelites hymning their God in elaborate choruses (often in two choirs), Handel's audience were being reminded of the validity of their own forms of worship, and reaffirmed in their identification of themselves as God's chosen people in the modern world."

¹⁴ The melody here is used in one of the most popular German hymns, Heinrich Ranke's "Tochter Zion, freue Dich."

3

The oratorio form itself is political, in the first place, because it is discussed in the context of political distinctions – here especially the distinction between the English oratorio and the foreign opera – and second, because this musical genre enacts a political identity as a community of performers and listeners. For this reason, the patriotism of the Maccabee oratorios also has a special meaning not derivable solely from their texts or the underlying biblical source, but rather emerging from an understanding of its aesthetic and political context. We need here to keep in mind that in the mid-eighteenth century, modern civic patriotism was not simply present, waiting for its fitting compositional form; rather, it was in the process of developing, the oratorio thus serving in this respect as a significant medium of self-representation. Ruth Smith, for instance, has pointed to the centrality of the contemporary political situation for understanding Handel's oratorios; she has shown that the new patriotism, located between politics, morals, and religion, gained its impact through a deep social unease caused by various upheavals, threats, and experiences of crisis.¹⁵ In the oratorios, this context is encapsulated in the image of the patriotic leader ("And grant a leader bold, and brave, / If not to conquer, born to save" [no. 8]), an image with many features of Lord Bolingbroke's *The Idea of a Patriot King*, published in 1738. Such a leader is not intent on aggrandizing personal power, but steps on the stage with modesty and emphasizes that human power always depends on a higher authority (no. 38):

How vain is man, who boasts in fight
 The valour of gigantic might!
 And dreams not that a hand unseen
 Directs and guides this weak machine.

¹⁵ Although precisely in the case of *Judas Maccabeus* relating libretti directly to contemporary events is hardly convincing, Smith has opened new research-horizons by pointing to the importance of the oratorios' context. See also: Jürgen Schläder, "Der patriotische Held. Politische Moral und Gesellschaftsentwurf in Judas Maccabeus," in *Beiträge zur Musik des Barock: Tanz – Oper – Oratorium (Bericht über die Symposien der Internationalen Händel-Akademie Karlsruhe 1994 bis 1997)*. Günter Kөнemann zum 65. Geburtstag, ed. Hans-Joachim Marx, vol. 6, Veröffentlichungen der Internationalen Händel-Akademie (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1998), 295–310.

From the beginning, he will invoke "the spirit of our Fathers" (no. 12): not his own autonomous power but the old promises, in whose service he places himself. Above all else he is concerned, in contrast to the absolute sovereign (e.g. of Spain and France), not with domination and conquest but with peace (no. 24):¹⁶

No unhallow'd desire
Our breasts shall inspire,
Nor lust of unbounded pow'r!
But peace to obtain:
Free peace let us gain,
And conquest shall ask no more.

Note that the true ruler, his peaceable work, and even the entire course of history are interpreted biblically. In "Judas Maccabeus," the opening defeats are interpreted by high priest Simon in lines clearly echoing 2 Macc 6:12 as trials: "Be comforted, nor think these plagues are sent / For your destruction, but for chastisement" (no. 42); but on the level of action, the linkage of religion and politics is manifest in the inserted scene of the temple purification: Simon interrupts the military jubilation of "sound an alarm" ("Enough! To Heav'n we leave the rest" [no. 47]), to propose a distribution of labor: "We may divide our cares; the field be thine, / O Judas, and your sanctuary mine" (*ibid.*). The following restoration of the temple service rests on a basic assumption of the "patriots" that only an inner moral renewal can produce renewed external strength: "Such profanation calls for swift redress, / If e'er in battle Israel hopes success" (*ibid.*).

The ordering catchwords of the oratorio "nation", "religion", "law", and "liberty" themselves emerge from this simultaneously outwardly and inwardly directed patriotism. They are initially introduced very simply through an aria of Simon (no. 10): "In defence of your nation, religion and laws / The Almighty Jehovah will strengthen your Hands." These are the formulae of "British Israel," the tradition within whose framework, starting with the reformation, England had considered its national fate as a continuation of the history of biblical Israel. In that tradition, "law" meant identity-constituting religious law but also the

¹⁶ The theme of peace is also stressed in "Alexander Balus," for instance when the Jews are presented for the first time: "The sons of Israel, no less of peace / Desirous, than alert and brave in war / Whene'er their country calls" (no. 3).

constitution, guaranteeing precisely the unity of nation and religion.¹⁷ But in the subsequent numbers of "Judas Maccabeus," a re-evaluation takes place that in a certain respect corresponds to contemporary discourse, above all in the emphasis placed on "liberty," which is treated in no less than nine sequential numbers of the first act. This begins with an aria of Judas ("Great is the glory of the conqu'ring sword, / That triumphs in sweet liberty restor'd" [no. 13]), which is followed by a multi-part aria of the Israelite woman ("O liberty, thou choicest treasure" and "Come, ever-smiling liberty" [nos. 15–16]) and man ("Tis liberty, dear liberty alone" [no. 18]), and then a duet by both (again "Come, ever-smiling liberty" [no. 19]). Finally, the series culminates with Judas' evocation of his father's testament, which bequeathed a momentous decision: "Resolve, my sons, on liberty, or death!" (no. 21).

At first glance, the central location of "liberty" does not fit that well with the oratorio's political impetus: after all, it was meant to celebrate the suppression of a rebellion emerging from the Scottish desire for freedom. In his already-cited reminiscences, Morell indicates that he originally furnished the piece with distinctly clearer references, which, however, Handel did not use, something that may partly be due to difficulties involved in figuring Cumberland as Judas.¹⁸ In any event, it here becomes evident that "Judas Maccabeus" represents not so much a direct political allegory as a more general staging of patriotic discourse. As a central achievement of the developing commonwealth's domestic politics and foreign policy, "liberty" was constantly experienced as threatened by the Jacobite revolt, the French and Spanish desire for expansion, and by the putative absolutistic measures taken by the Walpole government.

For patriotism, the alternative of "liberty or death" (no. 21) is itself of central importance. It, as well, has various expressions; it already has something like its prelude in the first act's final chorus "Hear us, O Lord, on Thee we call, / Resolv'd on conquest, or a glorious fall" (no. 26). As already detailed, the second act takes up the theme of

¹⁷ See Dorothea Schröder, "Die Briten als auserwähltes Volk in Händels Oratorien-Ideal und Wirklichkeit," in *Beiträge zur Musik des Barock*, 271–284.

¹⁸ Morell writes that he "had introduced several incidents more apropos, but it was thought they would make it too long and where therefore omitted," cited from *Händel Handbuch*: vol. 4, *Dokumente zu Leben und Schaffen auf der Grundlage von Otto Erich Deutsch "Handel – a Documentary Biography,"* ed. Walter Eisen and Erich Otto Deutsch (Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1985), 407.

the "fall" and culminates in the highly effective chorus: "if to fall, For laws, religion, liberty, we fall" (no. 46), a rather transparent echo of 1 Macc. 3:59. The theme of heroic death is treated in the same oppositional framework; soon the theme would be indissolubly integrated into the discourse of patriotism. Here, however, it plays a strikingly small role, being manifest in the recollection of the dead in the third act's victory celebration (no. 61):

But pause awhile: due obsequies prepare
To those who bravely fell in war.
To Eleazar special tribute pay;
Through slaughter'd troops he cut his way
To the distinguish'd elephant, and, whelm'd beneath
The stabbed monster, triumph'd in a glorious death.

Morell here has recourse to the episode of Eleazar Avaran, who "gave himself to deliver his people and to acquire an everlasting name" (1 Macc 6:44), with the name also reminding the oratorio's biblically aware listeners of the martyr Eleazar from 2 Macc 6. With these two figures, he constructed a patriotic martyr who triumphs over the enemy in his death, and for posterity. However, this passage does not have a prominent role for either the action or the affective structure of the oratorio, not even for its music. To the contrary, it represents simply a bridging recitative of pronouncedly episodic character. Hence "dying for God" is being alluded to here, but in a manner that is neither incisive nor specific.

4

An essential aspect of the aesthetic and political substance of the Maccabee oratorios is their performance and reception. The oratorios already play a highly important role in theatrical history because sacred music had already left ecclesiastical space: the oratorios were rarely performed in churches. Theaters and opera houses were the usual venues of choice for these performances. They were likewise held outside the church in important choric events such as the Three Choirs and Salisbury festivals. But precisely this linkage of the sacral with the theater – struggled against so avidly by the Puritans – would prove eminently successful. It was the oratorios that became the paragon of a new art not meant as either pure entertainment or stately representation, but rather as moral edification: an aim earlier reserved

for religion in general and preaching in particular. Following initial resistance, the oratorio became the artistic form of the strongly religious middle class; its connection of texts that were both patriotic and religious at once to serious music and choral singing represented a sort of compromise that would only be rejected by extreme Puritans on the one hand and connoisseurs of Italian opera on the other hand.¹⁹ Not least of all, the decisive step included in the emergence of this middle-class art was economic in nature: in 1747, hence in the year of “Judas Maccabeus,” Handel for the first time replaced the subscription system with direct sale of tickets, thus doing away with patronage in favor of a modern art-market.

The history of the oratorio’s success continues into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Above all in England and Germany, they took on a central role in middle-class musical life, revealing especially strongly a certain form of artistic piety. The continuous enlargement of chorus and orchestra at the relative expense of soloists led to even more monumental performances: over 600 musicians participated at the Handel commemoration in Westminster Abbey in 1784. Starting in 1859, Handel’s music was also performed in the newly built Crystal Palace, with 500 orchestral musicians and 4000 choristers.²⁰

The oratorio’s patriotic contents were themselves repeatedly manifest and this not only in England. The works resonated especially in Germany, with the Maccabee oratorios here having a particularly prominent role. Already in 1811, Carl Friedrich Zelter dedicated performance of “Judas Maccabeus” to Prince Louis, who had fallen in the battle of Saalfeld. In the course of the nineteenth century, the “German” element of Handel’s work was increasingly emphasized, despite this not being simple in the case of a composer whose working life was fixed in England. For example, in 1859 at the 100th anniversary of Handel’s death, the literary historian Georg Gottfried Gervinus, who also translated Handel’s libretti, wrote as follows:²¹

¹⁹ See the material in Dean, *Handel’s Dramatic Oratorios*, 134–143.

²⁰ See Hogwood, *Handel*, 234ff., 256–270.

²¹ Georg Gottfried Gervinus, “Aufruf zur Säcularfeier von Händels Todestag”, cited in Werner Rackwitz, *Geschichte und Gegenwart der Hallischen Handel Renaissance* (Halle: Schriften des Handel-Hauses, 1977/79), 1: 16–20, here 20. Gervinus’s manifesto focused on a re-nationalization of Handel: “The English who took him from us have made him a citizen and elevated his monument to the pantheon of their great deceased. If we do not wish to remain behind the foreigners in our attestations of honor to *our* genius, then we have to again make him our citizen.”: *Ibid.*, 1: 18.

For in his [Handel's] works, such an abundance of authentically German nature and power, wealth and imagination, versatility and depth is present that it is not foolhardy to predict: each time the German nation rises to a higher national sense of self, they will speak to such an exalted community with increasing strength.

As a matter of fact, in Germany, each national renaissance was accompanied by a Handel renaissance, especially in respect to the oratorios. In 1904, for instance, the music historian Hermann Stephani saw "Judas Maccabeus" as a *Volksdrama* representing the "awakening and laboring upward of the *Volk* from dull despairing self-renunciation to the noble feelings of re-conquered self-awareness."²² In 1922, Alfred Heuß, an equally prominent Handel researcher, referred to that oratorio as "the first democratic genre of art in the modern sense";²³ twelve years later, his tone was different: "Judas Maccabeus" was now "an unprecedentedly important work of state," the Temple purification in the second act having all too topical implications:²⁴

And now however, during the second campaign: the work taken over from a leader [Führer] of the sort, say, of Freiherr vom Stein of a purging [Säuberung] of the native soil of all that is unhealthily and disruptively foreign, a work carried out so forcefully that it extends over two acts. If Germany had acted in this way behind the front during the war, the outcome would have been different. But how does this purge recall the domestic labor of the present German regime in the past year! One need only replace the word used in the work with "Deutschland" and listen: "For Sion, holy Sion, seat of God, In ruinous heaps, is by the heathen trod..." The extent to which all this is conceived in terms of national policy will be clear. Military victory first receives its meaning when a clean, healthy spirit rules in the country.

And the proposed substitution is actually carried out: a sad nadir in the history of the Handel oratorios was reached in their treatment during the Third Reich, when the "Jewish" material was masked or eliminated. We thus read as follows in Victor Klemperer's "Philolo-

²² Hermann Stephani, "Händels Judas Makkabeus," *Die Musik* 31 (1908/09): 79–84, here 79.

²³ Alfred Heuß, *Hallesches Händelfest: Festschrift* (Halle: Karras & Koennecke, 1922), 43. Cited from Rackwitz, *Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 1: 69. See also Pamela M. Potter, "The Politicization of Handel and His Oratorios in the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, and the Early Years of the German Democratic Republic," *Musical Quarterly* 85 (2001): 311–341.

²⁴ Alfred Heuß: "Händel und Bach als zwei Seiten deutschen Wesens," *Zeitschrift für Musik* 101 (1934): 489–494, here 491–93.

gist's Notebook": "In September 1940 I saw a church notice on the advertising columns: 'Hero of a Volk; Oratorio of Handel.' Beneath this stood, printed in anxiously small letters and in brackets: 'Judas Makkabeus; newly arranged printing'."²⁵ In this period no less than six such adaptations of "Judas Maccabeus" were offered. These versions sometimes transposed, so to speak, the plot: for example, C.G. Harke's and Johannes Klöcking's adaptation *Wilhelmus von Nasssau* replace the biblical story with that of the Netherlands' war of liberation (explicitly presented as a pan-German event). Another option was to elevate the story to such a plain of generality that the concrete references to the Jewish context became invisible, as in Hermann Stephani's "Feldherr", an adaptation that was performed 150 times.²⁶ In this way the political contents of the oratorio art-form, perhaps even the political dimension of this particular theme, turned out eminently adaptable, indeed highly popular, in apparently widely removed contexts.

There was, however, an alternative reception. In the 1933–1934 performance season the Berlin *Kulturbund deutscher Juden* presented "Judas Maccabeus." One of its initiators, Kurt Singer, referred to Handel's work as a "mighty heroic hymn to freedom."²⁷ And even nine years later, imprisoned in Theresienstadt at the end of his life, Singer recommended performing Handel, rather than, say, Verdi: "If not in Theresienstadt, then where? There is no country or city in Europe where 'Israel' or 'Judas Maccabäus' could be performed. Only Theresienstadt had this chance. It was not used."²⁸

²⁵ Victor Klemperer, *Lingua Tertii Imperii: Notizbuch eines Philologen* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1975), 84.

²⁶ For a detailed description of the adaptations, see Karja Roters, *Bearbeitungen von Handel-Oratorien im Dritten Reich* (Halle: Schriften des Händel-Hauses, 1999).

²⁷ Cited from Bernd Sponheuer: "Musik auf einer 'kulturellen und physischen Insel': Musik als Überlebensmittel im Juedischen Kulturbund 1933–1941," in *Musik in der Emigration, 1933–1945: Verfolgung – Vertreibung – Rückwirkung* (Symposium Essen, 10. bis 13. Juni 1992), ed. Horst Weber (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1994), 108–135, here 131.

²⁸ Cited from Ulrike Migdal, *Und die Musik spielt dazu: Chansons und Satiren aus dem Konzentrationslager Theresienstadt* (München: Piper, 1986), 170f.

THE RECEPTION OF AN UNREAD AUTHOR:
ZACHARIAS WERNER'S "MOTHER OF THE MACCABEES"

Gabriel Stoukalov-Pogodin

*And truthfully! We can't understand famous people if
we haven't gained a sense of those who are obscure.*

Franz Grillparzer

1

For the start of the nineteenth century, German literary history records a remarkable range of outstanding personalities whose work has taken a firm place in the canon. However, there are other authors whose work has gone unrecognized during their lifetimes. Inversely, there were some authors whose fame eventually came to fade from historical consciousness. Friedrich Ludwig Zacharias Werner (1768–1823) is part of the latter group to an almost unique degree. In the early 1800s this poet and preacher was one of the most prominent public figures in the German-speaking world. More than his relatively erratic literary success, what helped him achieve so much fame was both his association with the age's most important poets and potentates, and his striking demeanor.

Together with contemporaries who are now far better known, Werner witnessed the way in which the French Revolution's effects led to something like an evolving, collective national identity for the Germans.¹ In this process, a decisive role was played by early German Romantic

¹ In general the origins of a linguistically-founded concept of nation are located in Herder's writings; see Harold James, *A German Identity 1770–1990* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1990), 38–41; Hagen Schulze, *Der Weg zum Nationalstaat: Die deutsche Nationalbewegung vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zur Reichsgründung* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1985), 62f; Karin Luys, *Die Anfänge der deutschen Nationalbewegung von 1815 bis 1819* (Münster: Nodus-Publications, 1992), 23; Otto Dann, *Nation und Nationalismus in Deutschland: 1770–1990* (Munich: Beck, 1993), 41f. For a comprehensive and systematic overview of recent research on nationalism, see: Miroslav Hroch, *Das Europa der Nationen: Die moderne Nationsbildung im europäischen Vergleich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005).

authors; through their texts, they offered a platform for trans-regional political exchange, thus making an elite political discourse possible.² As was the case with his colleagues, Werner tried to use his speeches and publications to contribute in his own way to the same “patriotic codes”³ that would furnish the striving for national identity with a linguistic form much later on.⁴ As with most literary figures in the German-patriotic movement, he enthusiastically greeted Napoleon’s defeat in the liberation wars of 1813–1814;⁵ and together with his colleagues he saw the road paved for a strong coalescence of Germans

² See: Bernhard Giesen, *Die Intellektuellen und die Nation: Eine deutsche Achsenzeit* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1993), 19; Detlef Kremer, *Romantik: Lehrbuch Germanistik*, Stuttgart (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2007), 17–21; Gerhard Schulze, *Die deutsche Literatur zwischen Französischer Revolution und Restauration*, vol. 2: *Das Zeitalter der Napoleonischen Kriege und der Restauration* (Munich: Beck, 1989), 20.

³ See: Bernhard Giesen and Kay Junge, “Vom Patriotismus zum Nationalismus: Zur Evolution der ‘Deutschen Kulturation’,” in *Nationale und kulturelle Identität: Studien zur Entwicklung des kollektiven Bewusstseins in der Neuzeit*, ed. Bernhard Giesen (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1991), 255–303, esp. 255–257.

⁴ Zacharias Werner appears to have viewed himself as bearing this responsibility. See: Gerard Kozielek, “‘Blute der Störer am Blockel’ Zacharias Werner zwischen Revolutionsenthusiasmus und Legitimitätsdenken,” in *Deutsche Romantik und französische Revolution: Internationales Kolloquium Karpacz 28. September–2. Oktober 1987*, ed. *idem* (Wydawn: Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1990), 181–194, here 186f.

⁵ Gerard Kozielek even classifies Werner as a “singer of the wars for freedom” (See: Gerard Kozielek, *Das dramatische Werk Zacharias Werners* (Wrocław: Zakt. nar. im. Ossolinskich, 1967, 313–314). He was, however, absent from the struggle itself, as he was in Rome at the time. Nevertheless in a letter written in Florence in 1812, he asks Karoline von Humboldt, the wife of Wilhelm von Humboldt, to clarify matters with all those doubting his integrity: “Please have the kindness to add that I do not approve any deviation [Exzentrizität] ... that I consider it my vocation to be of use to my fatherland by pointing in poetic and other form to what is solely and eternally true, and that I intend to fulfill this vocation as long as God and my fatherland allow this.” (*Briefe des Dichters Friedrich Ludwig Zacharias Werner: mit einer Einführung*, ed. Oswald Floeck [Munich: G. Müller 1914], 2: 241.) Werner then composed lines on the relation between preacher and soldier in 1814: “Both you rescuers of humanity / are sent from the highest one, / only the paths being different / but closely related in goals” (“Die Beid’Ihr Menschenretter / vom Höchsten seyde gesandt, / Im Wege nur verschieden, / im Ziele nah verwandt!” See Zacharias Werner, *Die Weihe der Unkraft* [“The Benediction of Non-Strength”]: *Ein Ergänzungsblatt zur deutschen Haustafel, cum notis variorum, die besser sind als der Text* (Dixi – sed salvavi animam meam?) (Frankfurt a. M.: 1814), reprinted in *Das Schicksalsdrama*, ed. Jakob Minor (Berlin/Stuttgart: Spemann, 1838 [n. d.]), 225–237, here 234. On the historiographical formation of myth in connection with the interpretation of war, see Christopher Clark, “The Wars of Liberation in Prussian Memory: Reflections on the Memorialization of War in Early Nineteenth-Century Germany,” *Journal of Modern History* 68, no. 3 (1996): 550–576; On Werner’s anti-Napoleonic poems in particular, see Colin Walker, “Zacharias Werner and the Crusade against Napoleon,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 71 (1989): 141–157.

into a common nation. To this end, there was a preference for historical arguments from both the recent and distant past;⁶ but a rhetorical equation of religiosity and patriotism was also quite widespread.⁷ Radical patriots like Theodor Körner and Ernst Moritz Arndt considered the war against Napoleon to be a "holy war" or crusade⁸ and the Germans as God's chosen people.⁹ Werner, who had converted from Protestantism to Catholicism in Rome on April 19, 1811¹⁰ and who worked in Vienna as an independent preacher after his ordination in 1814, would have appreciated such language. He viewed the German liberation movement's success as resting, on the one hand, on the patriotic cohesion of the people, and, on the other hand, on God's help, which the German nation had earned through faith and piety.¹¹

⁶ See Schulze, *Der Weg zum Nationalstaat: Die deutsche Nationalbewegung vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zur Reichsgründung* 1989, 18f.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 44; 61; 66f; Victor Conzemius, "Kirchen und Nationalismen im Europa des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts," in *Katholizismus, nationaler Gedanke und Europa seit 1800*, ed. Albrecht Langner (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1985), 11–50, 42f.

⁸ Theodor Körner, "Aufruf," in *idem, Werke* (Leipzig/Vienna: Bibliographisches Institut, 1893), 1: 88–90.

⁹ See Reinhard Wittram, *Das Nationale als europäisches Problem vornehmlich im 19. Jahrhundert: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Nationalitätsprinzips* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1954), 109–148, esp. 117.

¹⁰ Werner's "Die Weihe der Unkraft" was meant as an allusion to his earlier "Martin Luther oder die Weihe der Kraft," hence an act of distancing himself from his earlier Luther-glorification reflecting his Catholic conversion. See Werner, *Weihe der Unkraft*, 225: "Tempted by false desire, and through the play of the senses, / But knowing that the source of our being flows from love, / I set the image of sick lust brazenly on love's throne, / And through works of phantasmagoric delusion sneered at truth." ("Durch falsche Lust verlocket, und durch das Spiel der Sinne, / Doch wissend, daß aus Liebe der Quell der Wesen rinne, / Setzt ich der kranken Wollust Bild keck auf der Liebe Thron, / Und durch dies Gauckelblendwerk sprach ich der Wahrheit Hohn.")

¹¹ See Zacharias Werner, *Werner's Predigten. Nachgelassene Predigten: gehalten in den Jahren 1814–1816* (Vienna: Wallishauser, 1836), 99, 68. In actuality the evidence shows that the revolt against Napoleon was not at all unanimously shared across different social strata, the motives for resistance being highly varied and individual and the consequences anything but clear. See Otto Dann, "Deutsche Nationsbildung im Zeichen französischer Herausforderung," in *Die deutsche Nation: Geschichte – Probleme – Perspektiven*, ed. *idem* (Vierow bei Greifswald: SH-Verlag, 1994), 9–23, here 18.; John Breuilly, *The Formation of the First German Nation-State, 1800–1871* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1996), 29; Wolf D. Gruner, "Der Deutsche Bund als Band der deutschen Nation 1815–1866," in *Vom schwierigen zusammenwachsen der Deutschen: Nationale Identität und Nationalismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Bernd Jürgen Wendt (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1992), 49–79, here 56; Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 11, 48.

His disappointment must have been great when the abatement of military action was accompanied by, it seemed, a gradual cooling off of what had been perceived as the liberation war's dynamic of religious enthusiasm. The military success against Napoleon had prompted his contemporaries to work more intensely than previously on refining the sometimes strongly diverging constructs of German nationhood – that success seemed to give credence to the underlying nationalist sentiment. But a rise in religiosity was broadly lacking. Very much to the contrary: in the period of restoration, the new political ideas were markedly oriented around rational Enlightenment ideals. There was little manifest interest in restoring the ecclesiastical influence that had basically been cut to a minimum under Napoleon.¹² From his pulpit, Werner led a bitter struggle against secularization and the diminution of piety. He harshly criticized the fact that such reverence for God, ultimately in his view the source of victory in the liberation wars, was in radical decline. He viewed the advancing Enlightenment as responsible for this development. He pleaded for placing a check on non-belief, which “after it raged long enough in the palaces of the so-called great men, has begun to storm the domestic peace of the Christian citizen, the cottage of the Christian countryman, in order to suppress God, the primal source of wisdom, of light, from our hearts, and to make us believe that amounts to being wise and enlightened!”¹³ But already in 1815, following the end of the Congress of Vienna, there was very little inclination left (except on the part of close intimates and faithful Viennese churchgoers) to pay attention to Zacharias Werner's religious ideas or to the man himself.

In a letter dated December 28, 1817 to his good friend and long-standing publisher Julius Eduard Hitzig, Werner indicates the following: “I have almost finished my tragedy ‘Die Mutter der Makkabäer,’ whose 1st and 5th acts are among my most accomplished.”¹⁴ Since

¹² On the position of the German Catholic Church, see Heinz Hürten, *Kurze Geschichte des deutschen Katholizismus 1800–1960* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1986); Rudolf Lill, “Katholizismus und Nation bis zur Reichsgründung,” in *Katholizismus, nationaler Gedanke und Europa seit 1800*, ed. Albrecht Langner (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1985), 51–63; Conzemius, *Kirchen und Nationalismen im Europa des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, 1985; Wolfgang Frühwald, “Katholische Literatur im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert in Deutschland,” in *Religiös-kulturelle Bewegungen im deutschen Katholizismus seit 1800*, ed. Anton Rauscher (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1986), 9–26.

¹³ Werner, *Predigten*, 62.

¹⁴ Floeck, *Briefe*, 2: 307.

starting his preaching career in Vienna,¹⁵ Zacharias Werner had written no more plays.¹⁶ Now, a few years before his death, he made a final effort to give his perspective dramatic form.¹⁷ His tragedy treats the Maccabees' war of liberation against Antiochus Epiphanes. Through deception, Antiochus succeeds in capturing Salome and her sons, who

¹⁵ Werner's career as a minister and a preacher had begun under the spiritual guidance of the Redemptorist Clemens Maria Hofbauer in Vienna. At the time of the Congress of Vienna, Werner's sermons had become public events; the congress' guests made a habit of attending the extravagant appearances. He himself reports anonymously and in the third person: "It was the end of August 1814 when Werner arrived in Vienna, having traveled there from Aschaffenburg. The grounds leading him to Vienna would here be too wide-ranging to explain. In short, Werner found the well-known first congress assembled, and without his prompting he was asked to preach. The novelty and unusual nature, originality, even his appearance one might say, made Werner an extraordinary draw." (Anonymous autobiographical sketch found in "Friedrich Ludwig Zacharias Werner," in Franz Karl Felder-Joseph Waitzenegger, *Gelehrten- und Schriftsteller-Lexikon der deutschen katholischen Geistlichkeit* (Landshut: Joseph Thomann, 1822), 3: 409–421, here 415–6). At the same time, documents of the Viennese secret state police reveal Werner was subject to constant mockery. Cf. "Ungedruckte Akten der Wiener Polizei-Hofstelle über Zacharias Werner und seine Predigten in Wien aus den Jahren 1814–1819," trans. Prof. Dr. Oswald Floeck in *Der Aar* 3 (1913): 375–383, 491–502, 648–660, 818–824; Johann A. Humpelstetter, *Zacharias Werner in Wien. Charakterstudie über den Werner der Spätzeit auf Grund von Berichten seiner Wiener Zeitgenossen und Deutung seines Wesens in Leben und Werk dieses späten Abschnittes* (PhD Diss., University of Vienna: 1937 [no printversion available]).

¹⁶ From Florence in August of 1812, Werner wrote to Karoline von Humboldt, telling her in his letter that he wanted to "hang up the theatre". He also informed her that, from that moment on, he considered it his job to dedicate himself professionally to the German fatherland by meditating on the Truth, eternal and unique, in poetic and other forms... (Floecke *Briefe*, 2: 241). His motives, however, are cast into doubt through a note appended to the letter and addressed to Count Ferdinand Pálffy von Erdöd, one of the directors of the Viennese theater, informing the Count he would be more than willing to write an additional drama in turn for an honorarium (*ibid.*, 244).

¹⁷ Zacharias Werner's *ausgewählte Schriften*. Aus seinem handschriftlichen Nachlasse: Werner Zacharias, *Zacharias Werner's ausgewählte Schriften*, vol. 7: *Die Mutter der Makkabäer* [henceforth MdM], ed. seine Freunde (Grimma: Verlags-Comptoir, 1840); In his preface Werner indicates that he wrote the play at the start of 1816 (*ibid.*, vii). Kozielek suggests the play's idea emerged earlier, "directly after Napoleon's hundred-day rule." (See Kozielek, *Das dramatische Werk Zacharias Werners*, 315). The final form seems only to have been ready in 1818. See Floeck, *Briefe*, 2: 307. Kozielek suggests that Werner planned to publish the drama together with another tragedy of the same sort, thus hesitating with preparing proofs. In June 1819 the beginning of the first act appeared in a journal (see Kozielek, *Das Dramatische Werk Zacharias Werners*, 316). In any case it seems probable that Werner, who had begun trying to push through a performance immediately upon the play's completion (see Colin Walker, "Zacharias Werner's *Die Mutter der Makkabäer* and Biblical Drama in Vienna," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 18 [1982]: 23–38, here 23) waited to see it into print out of concern about his payment.

must all suffer a horrible martyrdom because they steadfastly refuse to violate Jewish law. Even Judas Maccabeus' belated effort to save them cannot prevent this martyrdom. The tragedy ends with the tyrant's conversion and subsequent death; Syrians and Jews make peace.

In contrast to earlier literary adaptations of the Old Testament's Maccabean literature, in juxtaposing the mother with her seven martyred sons and the war of liberation under Judas Maccabeus, Werner simultaneously takes up both strands of that literature's history of reception. Analogously to what was the case when he wrote his drama, its action begins at a point when that actual war is already part of the past. Like Zacharias Werner, over the course of the play Judas Maccabeus has to ask how former spectacular military success can be developed into a system that can endure beyond the singular event itself.

My argument here has two dimensions. Firstly, Werner uses the example of the Maccabean Wars to grapple with the German War of Liberation. In his search for the true reasons for the military victory, he mirrors the basic conflict between Napoleon and the Germans in the conflict between Antiochus and Salome, mother of the Maccabees. Salome's moral victory over Antiochus is interpreted here as a triumph of divine over earthly power. Antiochus' overbearing military power succumbs to the strength of Salome's unwavering faith. Such a position is consistent with Werner's biography and other writings.¹⁸ Second, the drama only reaches a deeper level through Judas Maccabeus, the play's third, as it were, secret main figure. His conflict consists of his relationship with his own history woven into the dramatic action in the form of reports and allusions. His war lies in the past; Salome's tools for challenging Antiochus have already been used by Judas Maccabeus against the tyrant's troops. The decisive question he negotiates with his mythic self is the one touched on above: whether his heroic past can be rendered into a sustainable and enduring concept in the present. In the end, this amounts to the question entirely topical in the restorative period, that of the proper understanding of his own history in relation to his present.

The linkage of the two levels of action expands the drama's horizon; Werner's text aims both at allegorically mythologizing the past and asking how this historical myth can be incorporated into political

¹⁸ In this regard, a starting point for the present chapter is the only extensive analysis of the play in Koziellek, *Das Dramatische Werk Zacharias Werners*, 313f.

reality. In this respect, the three main figures appear to offer a means to understanding the text.

2

The play's central opposition is verbalized in the dialogue between Antiochus and Salome. "How would they be called men, then," asks Antiochus, referring to his retinue, "if they were not created by chance, the ape of blind chaos!"¹⁹ Salome responds with a counter-question: "Have you overheard the Lord, how he turns the spheres / of the universe in holy darkness?"²⁰ Antiochus here pleads for a proto-evolutionary historical model, one ascribing human creation to chance. Salome confronts this model with a form of metaphysical creationism that is above all defined by being beyond sensory experience (being beyond "overhearing"). These opposing modes of interpreting reality determine both the action and linguistic usage of Werner's drama.

Salome's understanding of the world is based on her certainty that a God exists outside herself, although this God is not always sensorially graspable. She sees the law as God's earthly deputy and discovers the foundation for her actions in both an interpretation of the past and a ritual of mythic narratives. In this context, the marriage between Cidli and Salome's oldest son Benoni, taking place in the first scene, is characteristic. Salome insists that Cidli recite the history of her father, the famous martyr Eleazar, although she has to repeatedly interrupt the presentation in tears. Salome likewise insists that her own sons recount the story of the progenitor Mattathias. First and foremost it is the two families' genealogies that are brought together as opposed to the actual people. Salome practices a present-day synthesis of historical traditions; here a celebration for those who are living has no place. In contrast, the narrated past is omnipresent, temporarily even physically visible as it is with the manifestation of Eleazar's spirit during the wedding ceremony. Salome's action is determined from the outside. With her evocation of law and tradition, at no point in the

¹⁹ "Wie würden die, / Denn Menschen heißen – wären sie geschaffen / Vom Zufall nicht, des blinden Chaos Affen!"

²⁰ "Hast den Herrn belauscht, wie Er die Sphäre / Des Weltalls in den heil'gen Dunkel dreht?" Werner, *MdM*, 111f.

play does she have to call her decisions into doubt. In this way she relinquishes any responsibility for their consequences. In the end this radical religious traditionalism determines her death, and with it that of her sons.

To describe the worldview that Salome propagates, Werner makes use of organic metaphors. Only what is genealogically derivable, what is fixedly grounded in tradition, has a prospect of enduring existence. Weighing worldly possession against the value of the family, Salome thus observes that "Now we're rich, now the elements may rise up high, / that storm cannot tear down the cedars of our line."²¹ At another point, we read: "In my memory there's only room – For the cedars of God – end!"²² lineage and family tree in their literal and figurative meaning furnish cohesion, internal, and external strength.²³ On the one hand, the tree metaphors describe the rootedness capable of offering protection against what Werner refers to as a *Niederstürmen*, literally a "storming down." On the other hand, the *Stamm*, the radix, family line, and tribe, guarantees inner stability and a centrally oriented order. Shared history and genealogy are the primary criteria for inclusion: the house-servant Jonathas, for example, remains excluded from the family alliance despite fidelity over many years. He himself continues to employ metaphors from nature when he describes Judas' unstable position within this order: "How such a master of just that stamp (*Art*) can thrive (*arten*)!"²⁴ The reference to nature, *Art*, "kind," is also the deep-rooted German term for biological species. It here grounds a superiority of tradition and faith as phenomena that are naturally grown and alive over the artificial and constructed quality of power-oriented rationalism. This is the context for observing, finally, that after the death of the hated tyrant, Salome's spirit

²¹ "Jetzt sind wir reich, jetzt mag das Wetter hoch sich thürmen, / Die Ceder unsers Stamms kann es nicht niederstürmen!" Werner, *MdM*, 25.

²² "In meinem Angedenken ist nur Raum / Für Cedern Gottes – Ende!" *Ibid.*, 73.

²³ The tree as an image of inner strength is also found in *Weihe der Unkraft*, in a passage addressed to German masters and wise men: "For that reason you will beam forth names within the lineage of the world, / That, descending from Hermann's lap, simple, faithful, upright, just, / Strong as the Feldberg's oak and clear as the Rhine, / Despite foreign cunning was master of the earth" ("Drum werden ihre Namen strahlen im Weltgeschlecht, / Das, Herrmann Schooß entsprossen, einfältig, treu, gerecht, / Stark wie des Feldbergs Eichen und wie der Rhein so klar, / Trotz fremder Pffigkeiten der Erde Meister war." Werner, *Weihe der Unkraft*, 232.

²⁴ "Wie so'n Herr doch aus der Art kann arten!" Werner, *MdM*, 40.

nevertheless demands that no one else than his biological son accedes to the throne.

In Werner's play, the union of two mutually complementary parts repeatedly functions as a mode allowing constant growth. "First one's breast must steel itself for the frightful, / Before love and victory eternally are wedded" announces Salome at the play's very start;²⁵ and later: "Love, the child, becomes through law a man!"²⁶ Werner likewise suggests a connection between art and war through the following genealogical connection: "Come, Cidli's spouse, take up the holy lyre, / That I gave you as a gift alongside your first sword."²⁷ Finally, man and woman are also described as complementary on a number of occasions: "It is not time to be weak and flag, / When the lord's altar lies in ruins, / The holiest of holies, from pagan weapons. / Not only he who makes war upon the enemy, / The man alone – the woman as well must show, / That she's the crown of heroic song!"²⁸

Through Salome's stance, Werner portrays a nation capable of prevailing in battle against its enemies. If it is to remain firm not only inwardly but also in face of external threats, two things are required: on the one hand, with an appropriate understanding of past events playing a decisive role in such endurance, it has to rely on tradition, legitimizing the present through a permanent actualization of a common history; on the other hand, the nation's external strength demands an orientation of each individual towards an unquestioned center. Doubtless Zacharias Werner here actually envisions a fusion of religion and nation into a state defined by divine law and mutual love. In the end, an individual's affiliation with a nation is not determined by external traits or history, but rather has to be repeatedly demonstrated through unswerving faith and an enduring interpretive act.²⁹ Only a

²⁵ "Erst muß die Brust zum Grässlichen sich stählen, / Eh Lieb' und Sieg auf ewig sich vermählen!" *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁶ "Liebe, das Kind, wird durch Gesetz ein Mann!" *Ibid.*, 74.

²⁷ "Komm, Cidli's Gatte, nimm die heil'ge Leier, / Die Dir ich schenkte nebst dem ersten Schwert." *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁸ "Es ist nicht Zeit zum schwach seyn und erschlaffen, / Wenn der Altar des Herrn in Trümmern liegt, / Das Allerheiligste von Heidenwaffen / Muß sich nicht der nur, der den Feind bekriegt, / Der Mann allein; – es muß das Weib auch zeigen, / Daß sie die Krone sey vom Heldenreigen!" *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁹ Citing Edward Shils, Giesen speaks in this context of "the holy." Its construction and interpretation is incumbent on intellectuals, who gain an "interpretive monopoly" in this manner. See Giesen, *Die Intellektuellen und die Nation: Eine deutsche Achsenzeit*, 68–73.

nation steeled in this manner, Werner appears to be saying, could have been in the position to overcome Napoleon; and if this success is to be perpetuated, these contents must not be disavowed in favor of external form. In his Maccabean drama, Werner thus constructs retroactively the history of the revolt against Napoleon in order to bolster his own construction of the present.

3

The world perceived by Antiochus runs directly counter to that perceived by Salome: he has no inclination to recognize an external, metaphysical divine authority; rather, he locates divinity in himself. "He who threatens there, / in the twilight's flames!" he thunders like Goethe's Prometheus in the face of Zeus: "Be mocked! I myself / am God."³⁰ Religion and law simply serve Antiochus as a means to deceive his opponents and legitimize his power. His actions are determined by rationalistic utilitarianism. Beyond free will, only chance is effective, as Jason, a Jewish defector to the Syrian king, confirms in a reply to the pagan high priest: "Not Zeboath, chance alone / Is strong, we learn that from Epicurus!"³¹ For the securing and expansion of his power, Antiochus makes use of impure means, being accountable to no one but himself in the process. The metaphors defining this radically rationalistic conception are drawn from the realm of lifelessness. At Salome's prompting, the sons narrate the story of their ancestor Mattathias. Arath closes the story:

'If you consider,' he said, 'what could happen any time, / Then you'll find that none of those who trust God / Will ever go under, / For this reason, you needn't dread wicked spite. / Like a storm scatters dust, God will thus scatter them, / Make what they so gloriously build into mud! Only remain true, children, to the law!' Thus speaking the conqueror of pagans died.³²

³⁰ "Der dort droht, / In Flammen des Abendroth's! Dir Hohn! – Ich selber / bin Gott! Werner, *MdM*, 124.

³¹ "Nicht Zeboath, der Zufall nur / Ist stark, – so lehrt uns Epikur!" *Ibid.*, 56.

³² "Bedenkt,' sprach er, 'was jederzeit geschehen, / So findet Ihr, daß, welche Gott vertrau'n, / Die werden Alle nimmer untergehen, / D'rum soll Euch vor der Bösen Trotz nicht grau'n. / Wie Sturm den Staub, so wird Gott sie verwehen, / Zu Kothe machen, was sie herrlich bau'n! / Nur haltet treu ob dem Gesetz, Ihr Kinder!' – / So sprechend starb der Heidenüberwinder." *Ibid.*, 8.

Dust and mud here serve as metaphors for absence of belief. Material instability resulting from a lack of inner support is presented as a decisive form of instability, which leads to a permanent threat of collision between substances: they run the danger of being "pulverized."³³ The outer appearance of a "glorious" building stands opposed to inner corruption, law being the sole source of that absent support. What follows is an appeal to adhere, despite all such tempting appearance, to ungraspable substance and not to hollow form, to an ahistorical law that cannot be rationally challenged and not to its concrete historical manifestation.

In Werner's historical rendition, the figure of Antiochus is scarcely done justice in terms of the equation with Napoleon. Rather, we need to understand Antiochus more abstractly as a factor calling the naturally developed order into question through political might, or, in other words, imposing violently constructed foreign rule with rationally derived claims on a world defined in religious and genealogical not rationalistic terms. In this context, it is of secondary importance whether or not one sees in Antiochus a metaphor for Napoleon himself, for the French in general, or for the political and social movement known as Viennese Josephenism, which Werner vehemently opposed.³⁴

The basic opposition between Salome's law-abiding traditionalism and the sort of enlightened rationalism represented by Antiochus drives the action towards catastrophe. Following the play's inner logic, Salome's position turns out more stable than that of Antiochus. In the last act, the world order she stands for, otherwise scarcely experienced sensorially by non-believers, is manifest to Antiochus as physical pain, which forces him before his death to acknowledge the existence of an almighty God. Both positions, however, fail in face of reality. Although Salome and her sons re-appear as apparitions, they are nonetheless dead and can only have an indirect influence on the world of the living. But the drama does not end on this note. From the world of the dead, Salome presides over the continuity of her family: together Judas

³³ "Zerstäubt" See *ibid.*, 156.

³⁴ On Josephenism in general see, e.g. Hürten, *Kurze Geschichte des deutschen Katholizismus*, 14; in connection with Werner, see Humpelstetter, *Zacharias Werner in Wien*, 16f.

Maccabeus and the newly widowed Cidli are to continue their line by producing “heroes of God.”³⁵

4

Where the actions of both Salome and Antiochus are predetermined – Salome through sacred law, Antiochus through his megalomania – Judas Maccabeus is the only figure in the play with real freedom to make decisions and a need to justify them. At one and the same time, Judas appears in dual form, his actual personality standing in permanent contrast to his myth, brought into the present through a variety of narratives.³⁶ Strikingly, the conflict played out externally between Salome and Antiochus repeats itself with Judas on the level of internal action. The mythic figure of the warrior for freedom, capable of repeatedly winning God’s succor through piety and reverence for the law, corresponds to Salome’s stance. Not only does his war have divine approval but God himself intervenes authoritatively into the event, for example, in the form of three white knights favorably deciding the outcome.³⁷ But the actual opponent within the narratives treating Judas’ war is clearly not the hostile army but doubt among his own ranks, which Judas persistently overcomes.³⁸ Through his decisiveness, he achieves a superiority that can even win over hostile commanders and render them allies.³⁹

In the present conflict, however, his faith finds itself being tested. Tempted by the prospect of final victory and enduring peace, he makes himself doubly guilty, becoming part of a conspiracy while fooling his sister in the process. Salome condemns her brother’s lapses: “Seeing you die in a just battle / Would be a great pleasure to me, / But your breast flashes betrayal! / Go to iniquity, to perdition!”⁴⁰ Judas is delicately situated between opposing positions; in a framework of wartime

³⁵ Werner, *MdM*, 170.

³⁶ Jonathas, for example, reports about a song concerning Judas Maccabeus that Jerusalem’s children sing in the streets. See *ibid.*, 44. Kozielek even considers the frequently interwoven narratives of past events, whose contents sometimes intersect, to be “oppressive.” See Kozielek, *Das Dramatische Werk Zacharias Werners*, 319.

³⁷ *MdM.*, 77.

³⁸ See *ibid.*, 73f.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁴⁰ “In gerechter Schlacht Euch sterben / Sehen, wäre mir hohe Lust, / Doch Verrath sprüht Eure Brust! – / Rennt zum Frevel, zum Verderben!” *Ibid.*, 90.

tactics, he allows himself an act of opportunism: a sanctification of doubtful means for the sake of a noble goal. He knows which arguments to use, which actions will favor a certain outcome: "Knowing that the lord is pleased / by renunciation, / I'd arranged a festival."⁴¹ The procedure is legitimate as long as it does not conflict with the law. But from Salome's viewpoint, the tools of betrayal and deception are never admissible. With Judas' actions drawing him close to Antiochus' presumption, Salome sees herself forced to remind him of the difference between *Oberherr* and *Feldherr*, lord and commander.⁴²

Despite his limited presence, Judas Maccabeus is the secret central figure in Werner's play. In his figure, a conflict unfolds between past and present, original and copy, myth and reality, speech and action. Judas himself formulates the conflict when he addresses his nephew Jacob as follows: "You prattle well, but also learn well how to act!"⁴³ On a conceptual level, when forced to position himself in confrontation with his own myth, he represents a link between Salome and Antiochus. He is plagued by doubts regarding whether earlier mythological rhetoric can have relevance in the present-day world. With a "look to heaven," he asks his God: "What You wish will take place, / But lord, must I be the one who pours out the cup of your wrathful judgment."⁴⁴ Werner himself may have been plagued by this sort of doubt: Could the myths surrounding the wars of liberation – the promises that conflict could build nation and religion – be converted into sustainable political concepts?

5

Again and again, the interpretation of signs (in the broadest sense) plays a determining role in the progress of the play's action and the decisions of its main characters. These signs can appear in the most varied forms: as omens from spirits, symbolic forms such as the

⁴¹ "Ich hatte, wissend, daß dem Herrn gefällt / Entsagung, einen Festtag angestellt." *Ibid.*, 73.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 84.

⁴³ "Du plapperst gut, doch lerne gut auch thun!" *Ibid.*, 33. See also Werner, *Weihe der Unkraft*, 233: Prattling doesn't count, only acting; the world's no longer dumb." ("Nicht Schwatzen gilt's, nur handeln; die Welt ist nicht mehr dumm!")

⁴⁴ "Was Du willst, wird geschehen, / Doch, Herr, muß ich es seyn, der ausgießt die Schaal von deinem Zorngericht?!" Werner, *MdM*, 28.

breastplate of former Jewish high priest Jason, and stories and myths such as biblical texts and orally presented reports. The interpretation of signs, their understanding or misunderstanding, forms a central motif in the drama, emerging repeatedly at crucial transitional points. The figures here have to distinguish between form and meaning, with outer appearance often proving deceptive. For this reason, the correct reading constantly orients itself around content and never around form; at the same time, it frequently focuses attention on the concept of understanding just at places in the text where there is a significant lack thereof. At one point, in his helplessness, Antiochus turns to Jason and asks: "You're able to read signs, aren't you?"⁴⁵

And so the understanding, or rather, the misunderstanding of signs continues to mark the main turning points of the plot. On the basis of a false identification engraved on a sword, the Syrian troops believe that Jonathas is Judas Maccabeus. Alcimus, who carries out the arrest, thus confidently proclaims "The nobility of your gaze has given you away."⁴⁶ For its part, the capture of Salome and her sons only succeeds through a trick of Jason, who fools the law-abiding Jews through his high-priestly breastplate.⁴⁷ After Salome is informed that the symbol of the cross has made itself manifest as an apparition, she herself, living as she does in a pre-Christian age, can never really reconcile herself to its intended meaning; for her it remains a "stake of shame, upon which only slaves were beaten."⁴⁸ Jonathas can only correctly interpret the heavenly manifestation at the end, when the cross appears again, this time together with Salome's spirit. Even Judas Maccabeus' inner struggle with his symbolic function takes the shape of a hermeneutic problem: the starting point for his hubris is a mistaken reading of the book of Daniel (11: 21–45) through which he inscribes himself in Daniel's prophecy as an earthly executor of "Zeboath's power,"⁴⁹ thus justifying his conspiracy against Antiochus.

The correct interpretation of his own history determines his actions in the present, when he has to relive past heroic deeds. But here the past is not simply made present; at the same time it is permanently constructed; myths are created and the process of historization and

⁴⁵ "Du kannst doch Zeichen deuten?" Werner, *MdM*, 60.

⁴⁶ "Der Adel des Blickes Dich verräth!" *Ibid.*, 47.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁴⁸ "[Ein] Schandpfahl, d'ran man stets nur Knechte schlug." *Ibid.*, 18.

⁴⁹ "Des Zeboaths Macht." *Ibid.*, 71f., 81.

fictionalization is consciously displayed.⁵⁰ The founding of Maccabean identity appears to be grounded precisely in this process of creating and actualizing myths, hence in a synthesis of the past and present, not in the myths themselves. But, history is here not meant simply to be produced but to be evaluated. And it is to be judged not only according to its results, but also according to its true motivations and means applied. If Judas' strategy is to lead to success, he must not base it on his deeds but on his inner convictions. This determines whether, in his actions, he emulates Salome or Antiochus.

As already explained, the drama does not address the act of liberation but the time afterwards: its period of origin already suggests this. This is a time in which the liberation has itself gradually become a myth, and where the question of whether or not substance will follow propagandistic rhetoric still needs to be determined. To this end, the past, in the form of history and national myth, must first be created but then also interpreted. In contrast to Salome and Antiochus, both of whom stand for abstract concepts, Judas Maccabeus represents, as the only surviving main character, reality and the present that must grapple with the past. The correct interpretation of the past and its adequate linkage to the present here decide success or defeat. The same argumentative mode, historical interpretation in service of a general divinatory biblical exegesis, is also manifest in Werner's sermons.⁵¹ In this manner Judas Maccabeus stands in for questions that may have preoccupied Werner in connection with the German nation's future. But in his play he is not only concerned with presenting what in his view first made liberation of the Germans possible, but also with seeing to it that his readers and audience will be reminded of one thing: that such a correct understanding of the past is what will make an adequate forming of the future possible. In *Die Mutter der Makkabäer*, the Maccabees themselves become symbols of patriotism,

⁵⁰ This becomes clear for example when Jacob juxtaposes the myths of Judas and a certain Eliesar: "I see that you don't wish to say / That at that time you struck down six hundred men! / But Eliesar does it even better!" ("Gelt, Du willst nicht sagen, / Daß damals Du sechshundert hast erschlagen! / Doch der Eliesar macht's noch besser doch!"), *ibid.*, 32.

⁵¹ See, for example, Werner, *Predigten*, 91: "When we read the holy gospels with care, and compare what has been read with what transpires in the world and has done so since the beginning, we become aware that dear God owes us so little proof of each sentence he pronounced in his revelation – that not only individual human beings but entire peoples and ages are, rather, often mainly there to prove a single sentence in the Bible."

freedom, holy war, and the steadfastness of faith, their family's history serving at the same time as a parable for the fictionalization of history and the construction of reality.

6

"Shortly before his death," Heinrich Heine indicates in his biting critique of Romanticism, "joy in dramatic creation again awakened in Werner, and he wrote one more tragedy, entitled 'Die Mutter der Makkabäer.' ... The play found little approval with people here below; whether it pleased the angels more I don't know."⁵² Heine was not alone in his assessment: When it came to Werner's last play, his reception, often in any event poor, was particularly severe.⁵³ Putting aside a positive judgment by Friedrich Schlegel,⁵⁴ the work was generally rejected by his contemporaries and it was never performed.⁵⁵

The reasons for this highly limited resonance are complex. Until his death, Werner seems to have found no linguistic mode allowing him to express himself properly regarding present-day reality. The low quality of the play's language is frequently criticized, as is the general suitability of the biblical material for dramatic treatment. And in fact, the subject often seems treated stiffly and artificially, and towards the end, even implausibly. In general, Werner's reputation as a poet appears to have suffered strongly in this last phase – many people considered him fanatic or mentally ill. But quite possibly, the idea of a nation constructed in terms of the individual's ties to a God located outside his self, and to whom he was meant to readily sacrifice himself, did not correspond to the majority idea of what the future of the Germans should be. It is also possible that the play's late appearance contributed to its failure – that around 1814 approval on the part of the freedom fighters would have made a difference. In any event, there was evidently a basic disharmony between the author of *Die Mutter*

⁵² Heinrich Heine, "Die romantische Schule," in *idem, Werke und Briefe in zehn Bänden*, ed. Hans Kaufmann (Berlin/Weimar: Aufbau-Verlag, 1961–1964), 5: 7–164, here 134.

⁵³ For a rough overview of the reception history, see Kozielek, *Das Dramatische Werk Zacharias Werners*, 337f.

⁵⁴ Friedrich Schlegel, *Geschichte der alten und neuen Literatur*, ed. Ernst Behler (Munich-Paderborn-Vienna: 1981), 16: 405. See Kozielek, *Das Dramatische Werk Zacharias Werners*, 338.

⁵⁵ Walker, *Zacharias Werner's Die Mutter der Makkabäer*, 23.

der Makkabäer and the age of the play's writing. From this perspective, Zacharias Werner appears an anachronism: where the questions he formulated may have been thoroughly appropriate for his surrounding historical reality, this does not seem the case for the answers he found.

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